ノーゲーム・ノーライフ
NO GAME NO LIFE
2
ゲーマー兄妹が獣耳っ子の国に日をつけたようです
著／イラスト：榎宮祐
MFJ

「さぁ――ゲームをはじめよう」

「『十の盟約』以前は――
"首"を収集しておりました」
「もっとお二人のことを知りたいです。
その――それこそ隅々まで……うぇへへへ……」

「ふぁ……じゃ、キスを、ください」

「ふぁ……じゃ、キスを、ください」

「ふぁ……じゃ、キスを、ください」

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Prologue - Opening

Part 1

When one comes across a yet unopenable door in an RPG.

Have you ever thought this?

'If I could use magic, I should easily be able to blast through', or the like.

And yet you can't. Why is that?

It's because of the 'rules'.

—Games are different from reality.

There are those who claim that they cannot make the distinction.

But even they have likely felt at times that *something is different*.

What separates reality from that which isn't reality- is probably this.

There has been much discussion on whether sports are games or reality, but that's besides this topic.

The reason is that the difference between games and reality is something more fundamental than that.

It is the 'absoluteness of rules'.

Taking the example from earlier, if you went with the realistic line of thought of ignoring the rules.

You could blow past all doors and the like without hesitation.

What if the world is in a crisis, and somewhere there is a door which requires a missing key to open?

If it's all right to grab everything behind that door as long as you have the key, there's no reason why you can't do the same without it, even if you do wind up accused of some property destruction.

How about when faced with a door that not even magic capable of defeating the demon king can open, why not just destroy the wall?

If you bypass the super tough 'door' like this, you could go and challenge the demon king right off the bat.

Even if you just whack away at the rock with the legendary sword, surely it should be the rocks which

would eventually give way.

However, that's never the case. Why is that?

Because that simply *wouldn't be interesting*.

Yes, the rules are set so that a fun journey can be created culminating in a 'final objective'.

In chess, it'd be checkmating the king, in soccer it'd be scoring more goals, and in an RPG it'd be defeating the last boss.

That being said, if you circumvent the rules to arrive at the 'final objective' early, that takes all of the fun out of it.

Therefore, the rules in games have a 'shared absoluteness',

—I'm sure you can see by now.

Reality—doesn't have a 'winning condition'.

There aren't events completed by fulfilling certain conditions, nor peace brought about by defeating certain enemies.

The couple won't finally end up living happily ever after.

Whether blessed or unfortunate, rich or poor, all end up meeting the same 'dead end' eventually without exception.

Therefore, people have always made their own 'win conditions', and made their own rules to suit that end.

Whether it's by amassing wealth, or leading a comfortable life, by making things a win or lose scenario they've already lost.....

Now, let's imagine.

You're in a game of chess, when all of a sudden your opponent at his own convenience makes a ridiculous move.

Without even placing your king in check, he acts as if he had already won.

.....How about it. Wouldn't you want to punch him?

What if there's a game where everyone played like that?

Yes—that would be, 'reality'.

—Are games and reality really different?

That's the case, without a doubt.

To those who would confidently proclaim so, I'd like to answer with this.

I want nothing to do with you, ugh——

Part 2

Eight 23 inch computer screens.

That had been their whole world.

A small world, with an equatorial diameter of 13000 km.

The world covered by a fiber-optic cable network.....Earth.

The concept of 'distance' had been lost in this world.

When connected to the internet, one can transmit their desires around the globe seven and a half times per second.

You can connect even to the very ends of the world.

—People now say that the world is infinite.

—But what they mean is that the world has infinitely shrunk.

With a single click of the mouse, one has everything one needs in life.

The piles of empty boxes made the once spacious room seem cramped.

The displays emitted an artificial light.

Or rather, the inside of the monitors did.

The hexadecimal world constructed therein had been 'their' world—their everything.

Further crowding the room were countless PCs and game consoles.

The bundles of wires connecting everything, and the plethora of controllers made walking a major hazard.

Illuminated by that light were two emotionless faces.

The two were waging fierce battles against strangers from every corner of the globe.

One was a black haired, black eyed young man.

One was a white haired, red eyed young girl.

Utterly absorbed in their screens, the room was silent.

The headphones of the two provided all the sound of 'their own world'.

All that could be heard was the inorganic whirring of machines, and endless clicking.

—They thought the world had narrowed.

The electronic network brought the world to their feet without them needing to take a single step.

But that led to a tsunami of information exceeding the recognition of individuals.

That vast ocean of information had not led to the infinite, but rather to the contrary.

The result had been an 'information overload', which had caused people to retreat to their own narrow worlds of desired data.

An infinite number of tiny, closed worlds.

Isolated, smaller than ever, sparsely populated realities.

Leading to place not here, but a truly limitless different world.

Reflected in the pupils of the two was a 'different world' existing in the monitors.

Worlds which, with enough concentration, offered the illusion that they had truly entered another world.

They were not social outcasts, chained within a 16 tatami room.

Sometimes they were the heroic saviors of a nation.

Sometimes the leaders of the world's largest guild.

Sometimes magicians, elite special forces, or assassins.

Typically, the world would revolve around them.

A world with 'definite clear conditions'.

The young man heaved a sigh.

Eight 23 inch computer screens.

That had been their whole world, for an endless amount of time.

These siblings, 'undefeated' in every game they had ever played.

Within the small world of those monitors, were almost an urban legend.

Within the 'small world' to which they belonged, they were the same as the heroes which they played in games.

But the moment they looked away, everything was the same as always.

Artificial, cramped, quiet. Fitting for social outcasts.....an isolated, small world.

And the young man submitted to the unease which would always well up.

A sense of jamais vu[1], [is this really our room?]

Then, he would think further.

Without evidence, merely vaguely, fleetingly, wondering.

"Is this really...where we belong."

"Indeed, you are correct."

However a voice had responded to those questions in his mind.

Before him stretched their own familiar world.

The only thing out of place was a smiling, innocent, unfamiliar boy.

—No. Was he really that unfamiliar?

As memories began to unravel, the boy continued before he could make a sound.

"This isn't the place where you belong. Which is why....."

And then——

"Which is why, I will [Let you be reborn]."

Past and present, fiction and reality.

All of his recollections were still hazy.

Recognition became blurred, and as he began to lose his grip on the world.

What brought him back all of a sudden, was the same as always.

".....ah, I see. [I'm dreaming]."

And then things would end like all other 'dreams' did.

While unsure of just when it had ended, he felt his consciousness coming awake.....

Part 3

Kingdom of Elchea, Capital of Elchea.

After repeated losses in gambling, territory after territory had been ceded and this lone city was now the final bastion of humanity.

Within the corridors of the royal castle of this city, walking along with an unsteady gait, was a single girl.

She was Stephanie Dora.

Granddaughter of the late king, with red hair and blue eyes, she was royalty of a venerable line.

—and yet.

The circles under her eyes and the pallor of fatigue robbed her of her inherent dignity.

With a suspicious smile, heading dizzily towards the 'King's' chambers with playing cards in hand, she resembled nothing less than.....a ghost.

"Fu, fufufu.....today at last, is the day of judgement!"

The day had just dawned, but it seemed she had been up all night.

Stephanie—also known as Steph, laughed disturbingly.

"Sora, you're awake aren't you! It's already morning!"

Boom boom.

With her free hand, Steph noisily knocked at the doors of the 'King'.

But.

"Bee~~p. The person you are after is pretending to be out."

"Hah?"

The voice coming out from the room wasn't the voice of the 'King'.

It was a strange 'take it easy' voice, delivered flatly in the tone of a synthetic woman.

"Please step away from the door as soon as possible, and do not enter without permission."

"—Sora, are you messing with me?"

"No, I'm seriously serious."

"Enough already! I'm going to enter without permission!"

He was probably just playing games in there anyway—no, there was no way he could be doing anything else.

She fought back her drowsiness.

And broke down the doors with a kick—or rather.

She forcefully kicked the doors open, and entering into the bedroom of the king, what she saw was...

"Sorry I'm sorry I wasn't doing it on purpose I really was in a bit of a tight spot just now and I didn't mean anything bad by it I really mean that sorry so sorry I'm so sorry!"

—Prostrated flat on the bed, the profusely apologizing 'King'.

Wretched, with tears in his eyes, shivering.

Steph however, already familiar with this sight, looked around for the guide.

The room was already flooded with countless games, such that it was impossible to take a step anywhere.

Seeing something which should be present missing, Steph muttered.

"......Ara? Sora, you're alone?"

"Yes I'm alone I'm lonely I have no reason to live surely my being born was a mistake I'm sorry I'll hang myself quietly after you leave so for now please—"

"......Nii.....? You're...noisy....."

Interrupting the nonstop machine gun chatter of the 'King'—'Sora*, was a tired voice.*

Recognizing that voice, Stephanie let out another sigh.

"Come on, Shiro's right here isn't she. What are you doing?"

"—eh?"

At that point, Sora looked over startled at 'Shiro'.

It appeared she had fallen out of the bed while sleeping.

Arching up from the bedside was a girl white as snow.

He immediately recognized the figure of that girl whose white hair trailed all the way to the ground.

The sight of Sora suddenly clinging on to that figure was—beyond words.

"Aa~~~~~~hhh, thank goodness! Sheesh, what a troublesome sister! Because of your sleeping habits your brother almost hanged himself you know, what would you have done then!"

Clinging to his sister—to 'Shiro', he let loose a stream of tears.

Not being good with mornings.....being the only reason that could be thought of for her actions, his sister replied coldly with her eyes still half shut.

".....Nii.....this is, overkill....."

"Wha!? Do you not understand how your brother feels!?"

Standing up suddenly Sora began to speak with wild gestures.

"Then tonight! After Shiro's gone to sleep, I'll go hide in the closet! When you wake up, I won't——"

".....H.....hic.....uuu....."

Before he could even finish, however, Shiro began to cry.

"You see!? You understand how your brother feels, right!"

".....I'm, sorry.....my sleeping habits.....are bad, I'm...sorry....."

Seeing his sister apologizing so sincerely while sobbing, he stroked her head.

"No, I'm sorry. I went too far. Thinking such bad thoughts, I'm a terrible brother."

".....hic.....o, kay....."

With that, the man who had just earlier been shaking and apologizing like a newborn gazelle.

Now haughtily and forcefully turned around to Steph, and began throwing out orders.

"So, the one at fault is ultimately this bed! Steph, dispose of this at once and spread out some futons!"

"Wh, whaaaat!?"

Steph could never get used to the crazy antics of these siblings.

Having such an outrageous demand placed on her, she responded in a strange voice.

"I-it, it's the royal bed! Do you know just how long it's history go—"

"Nope. But for the purposes of sleeping it separated Shiro from me, so it's unsuitable. It's tilted, isn't it?"

".....Nod nod."

Shiro unhesitatingly showed her consent.

—-This was just ridiculous.

"Th, that one bed is enough to buy a whole house you know!?"

"Then sell it and let's buy a house. A happy family will be born, isn't that wonderful?"

"Y-y-y-y-you, youuu—"

Faced with a tyrant, Steph was trembling at a loss for words, when suddenly Sora spoke.

"Ah, that's right. The things in this room belonged to the previous king——in other words your grandfather's, Steph."

As if testing what her reaction would be.

Sora then tapped his fist into his palm, like he just had a great idea.

"Then let's do this. From today onwards, this will be your room."

"Wha—.....th, this is the 'King's bedroom' you know!?"

"I am the king. Wherever I sleep will be the 'King's bedroom'."

The 'King' briskly began to list things off.

"Just empty a room used by the maids. Well, leave the bedding and mattress of course."

As Sora continued saying that a futon, if available, would be more preferable, Steph's reasoning was unable to keep up for a moment.

Her reaction was several seconds late.

"T-the maid's rooms, are 'cabins' outside the castle you know!? They're made of wood you know!?"

"Hm? I can't let that pass you know, don't underestimate wood!"

Sora cleared his throat with a cough.

"Breathable, hygroscopic, temperature-regulated, shockproof, wind-resistant, surpassing all other materials, a fortress for hikikomoris! As long as you're careful with fire, there is nothing better to construct a Japanese house from—"

At that point, it seemed he thought of something.

Sora proceeded to retrieve the PC connected to a solar charger by the window.

"Ah, as I thought. There're textbooks on Japanese architecture in here."

".....Huh?"

"Right, let's make a 'house' on the castle grounds!"

"Eh.....?"

While Steph was left far behind, Sora continued heatedly.

"What do you think Shiro, our dream home! Wouldn't that be a great idea!?"

".....Place.....where?"

"Fufu, I already know everything you have in mind, my little sister!!"

Although it seemed the brother had only just started considering that point too.

With a flourish, he pointed to the castle courtyard outside the window.

"Right there is closer to the castle than the maids' place, and it won't cause a problem for the workers. It's close to the castle kitchens too, so we can continue being hikikomoris as usual! The greenery means the air is fresh, and it's not crowded! And thanks to the castle walls, the morning sun won't disturb us! Is there any more divinely situated place than this!!"

After Sora's proud speech, Shiro slowly raised a hand.

".....No....objections....."

"Alright! And so, Steph."

"Eh, ah, y-yes?"

Steph could only flap her mouth in bewilderment.

"Find some craftsmen of wooden buildings. Hm, I don't know what the building code for this world would be, so select say, a staff of twenty of the best? Just tell them to make it out of wood and leave the rest to them."

—Now for the late introductions.

This is the King and Queen of the final kingdom of 'Imanity', Elchea—Sora and Shiro, a pair of siblings.

They don't set a foot outside the room all day. All they do is play games, read, and make unreasonable demands.

—Very much like 'tyrants'.

"~~~~~~~~~~~~~~Soraaa! We're having a game!"

Dealing with these despots, Steph finally lost all patience.

Gripping the playing cards in her hand, she glared at Sora.

For those tyrants—yes, today was the 'day of judgment'.

—But.

"—.....Ohh?"

Hearing that word 'game', Sora's eyes sharpened.

At that instantaneous change, which Steph had already seen countless times, she shuddered.

The crying, shaking man from earlier had become a bumbling brother.

With a single switch.

As if seeing straight through one's heart, one's intentions, and holding all in the palm of his hand.

Enough to give off such an illusion, a machine-like calmness.

Yet his face was that of a game master, befitting the king of war.

—But before that.

Staring into his eyes, Steph instantly felt her heart leap and her face heat up.

She had challenged him to a game in this very same matter once before.

And the 'price' reminding her that she had been utterly beaten, was even now firmly engraved on her mind.

In the face of that, her momentum lost its steam.

Seeing Steph avert her gaze, reddened from ear to ear, Sora confirmed.

"You wish to challenge me to an 'Acciente' game, is that what you mean?"

"Y, yes, t-that's exactly right!"

".....the [Ten Oaths].....number, five.....the challenged...party has the right.....to decide...the contents of the game....."

Shiro recited the rule from memory.

—They were the absolute rules that God had decreed for this world.

Unbreakable in any situation, absolute and immovable.

"Heh~~on top of that, me? You challenge me to a game?"

—the game had already begun.

As Sora seized the psychological advantage, Steph was unable to get out the words she had previously prepared.

"A, a~ra, surely humanity's strongest gamer-sama would not be afraid to compete with me at m-my, strengths?"

Thinking desperately, Steph blurted out the countermeasure she had been practicing over and over.

But she couldn't keep a quaver out of her voice.

With a wry smile, Sora let out a bold laugh.

"I see, so you came at least a bit prepared this time—so, what is it you 'wish to wager'?"

Games played according to the [Ten Oaths] demanded absolute compliance.

What one gambled could said to be part of the tactics.

"Fufufu.....if I win—"

As if waiting for that question, Steph spoke without hesitation.

"Sora will [become a respectable person]!"

Ba-————m!

.....Steph declared as she pointed.

But the only response was silence.

"H, huh.....?"

A deathly silence reigned over the king's bedroom.

"I see it's come down to this", or "Don't hit me where it hurts!"

Steph had been expecting such replies.

But instead, Sora's eyes were shining brightly.

"I, I see—since the [Ten Oaths] are absolute, you can do that kind of thing as well!?"

"Heh!?"

At this better-than-expected response from Sora, Steph could only look away red-faced.

"B-b-but, didn't you order me to 'fall in love'.....if so—"

Indeed that time when Steph had faced Sora in a game, through a series of trickery she had been requested to 'fall in love'.

As you can see, regardless of her own will she had been forced to 'be in love'.

"I, I see,"

It was as if the scales had fallen from his eyes.

Moved to look up at the sky, Sora gave a cry.

"Th, then, don't make me a citizen—make me a 'riajuu[2]'!"

"Ria, juu? What the heck's that."

"It's technically the same as a citizen. Now let's play! I'll lose!!"

"Eh, well, um....."

Biting her lip, Steph seemed to be at a loss as to how to respond.

Succor came from an unexpected source.

".....Nii....if you, lose.....to someone apart from.....Shiro....."

"Wha—! S-sister, do you intend to stand in the way of your brother's path towards becoming a riajuu!?"

"..... 『Kuuhaku』 cannot...accept.....de...feat....."

"Guoohhh!"

Yes, Sora and Shiro—the combo of 『Kuuhaku』 can never accept any losses.

It was a promise the two had made back in the previous world.

In a world without rules, it was an absolute, unshakable rule the two had made for themselves alone.

As if he had fallen from heaven to hell, Sora's face displayed unmitigated despair.

"No way.....come on! I mean, there's no way I could lose to Steph in anything unless it's on purpose!!"

"You——!?"

Ignoring Steph who had begun twitching uncontrollably, the siblings continued their argument.

".....Even, so.....you can't....."

"This, this can't be, my rosy riajuu life was right before my eyes! H-hey, Shiro, you challenge me then. If it's you there'd be no problem, I can go all out and lose, let's say, in chess or something!"

".....But.....I refuse....."

"Arrrghhhh, goddammit! Steph!!"

"Y, yes!?"

Clasping his hands together as if in prayer, Sora turned to Steph and cried out from his soul.

"I realize that there is one in a million—no, it'd be more approaching an imaginary number, but there's gotta be a game you might just possibly somehow be able to beat me at! I'm begging you! Answer this infinitesimally small hope of mine!!"

"Fu, fufu.....fufufu.....fufufufufufufu, you yourself said it!"

Receiving that abuse laden rant, Steph's mouth twitched before she began laughing maniacally.

"The game will be—'Black Jack!"

"—.....Haaaahhh....."

".....Sigh....."

As the siblings both sighed for different reasons, Steph, not understanding either, looked dismayed.

"Eh, huh? What is it!? It's a game with a chance of success!!"

Sora merely returned another sigh.

Turning to Shiro who seemed to have lost all interest, Steph shouted.

"The dealer will be me! Sora will be the player! This way Sora can't cheat, and even if he does I'll know and it'd be my win! In a game of pure chance, ability doesn't matter!"

Sora looked out the window. A single twinkling glimmer slowly rolled down his cheek.

"Writing together the characters for 'human' and 'dreams' results in 'vanity', huh. Well Steph, don't be discouraged. There's always a next time."

Hearing Sora's line normally reserved for after winning a match, Steph exploded.

"Ma, making fun of me.....j-just you watch! 'Acciente'!"

That was the word used when invoking the [Ten Oaths], signifying a vow of absolute compliance had been made.

"Yeah yeah.....'Acciente'.....I guess."

"Oh, right, I forgot to add what I'll be gambling—"

"Sure.....well, whatever's fine.....sighhh....."

"Y, you——!!"

In the face of Sora who took his victory as a foregone conclusion, Steph inwardly told herself to calm down.

—Yes, calm down. There is a 'chance of victory'.

In her mind, Steph was grinning horribly.

A game of pure chance? No way in hell.

Steph had been busy practicing all night, of course she intended to cheat to win.

It was the dealer who shuffled.

If she counted out the cards while shuffling yet in an 'acceptable looking way', she could win.

Unlike substituting cards or the like, it was impossible to prove.

Number eight of the [Ten Oaths], 'If cheating is detected during a game, it will be regarded as a defeat'—in other words.

If it's not detected, you can do it!

(Fufufufu.....prepare to receive your just desserts for underestimating meeeeeeeee!)

—However, Steph didn't know.

More so since she had come this far.

Winning against Sora with something of that degree- was utterly impossible.....

Part 4

—Beyond the horizon.

Towering even over the mountains, large beyond human perception was a giant chess piece.

Perched on top of the king, his feet dangling over the edge, was a lone boy.

Whistling as if enjoying himself, in his hands were a 'blank book' and a quill pen.

"Nn.....what to write~"

It seemed as if he was thinking about the continuation of his story.

Over time, as he thought of something, his pen would move.

"Once upon a time, there was a world where an absolute rule was set prohibiting all force and calling for every dispute to be solved by games!.....there. Hm. Well, something like that?"

Nodding from his seat higher than the heavens, the boy looked out into the distance and muttered.

".....I wonder if they'll move soon.....the 'latest piece'."

The boy's name was Tet.

The creator of this world where everything is decided by games, 'Disboard."

The one who had emerged from the former War of the Gods seated as the sole god remaining, the 'God of Games'.

That lone god, his eyes sparkling as if reminiscing about a lover, looked out into the distance.

"—A question, art thou preventing the destruction of Imanity?"

From thin air, an arrogant voice resounded.

"—At last, hast thou been moved to act?"

Tet certainly took a little offense at that voice, yet he remained all smiles.

"Eavesdropping now? That's not a terribly commendable hobby."

Spying on the lone god Tet, the imperfect presence spoke.

It was undoubtedly one of the previous ranking Old Gods—and one still possessing a limited amount

of power at that.

Tet, who was now the sole god, could easily find out who it was, and yet he had no interest whatsoever.

"—A question, before the decision on whom to crown as Imanity's new king, an event modification was observed. Art thou taking sides?"

Tet answered, however, in a bored tone.

".....Really, you guys are dull as ever."

Then he reversed, and his eyes filled with sparkling anticipation once again.

With a yearning smile, Tet spoke.

"I am on nobody's side. If you won't understand that, you'll continue playing a stale game forever."

Then he laughed.

A laugh, which amidst the vast disappointment, contained great hope.

"'They' will come. All the way up to me—and none of you can stop them."

His eyes were far away, looking over the last city of Imanity—over Elchea.

For the one god, endless years were as the blink of an eye.

His eyes were like—

A child on the day he was going to the amusement park, impatiently awaiting for his parents to get ready.

With a whisper, Tet confirmed that the presence of the voice from the void had faded.

"Don't keep me waiting too long, 『Kuuhaku』 -san."

He knocked his heels against the piece he sat atop of.

"I'll run out of patience soon~, if you keep me much longer—I might just have to come out and play?"

Curling his lip fearlessly, God spoke.

"Ah, that's right. The continuation—"

As if thinking of the continuation of his story, Tet lifted his quill pen.

"One day two gamers from another world were invited to the country of Imanity, the lowest of the Exceed. The two came to defend Imanity, who had been backed into a corner to their final land—Elchea, by the other races, then becoming the king and queen—everything began from here.....kay ♪"

—the story continued to spin out.

Eventually it would be a grand epic, told to the people by bards everywhere.

What God wove was the story of future gods.

Writing out the prologue to the next legend——

Chapter 1 - Weak Square/Setting the Board

Part 1

The country of Imanity—Kingdom of Elchea. Capital of Elchea, Eastern Region District 6.

In the hall of a gorgeously luxurious mansion were five people seated around a table, and a number of others looking on.

Of those at the table, one's black hair was in a mess and there were dark marks under his eyes.

He was a young man wearing an 'I ♥ Humans' T-shirt and jeans, as well as sneakers.

Another was seated on his lap—one with long hair white as snow.

She was a young girl whose upturned eyes were as bright as rubies, wearing a black sailor uniform.

The young man wore the girl's tiara around his arm like an armband.

The girl, in turn, was using his crown as a barrette to keep her bangs in place.

These siblings were the King and Queen of Elchea, the final country of 'Imanity'.

The brother—Sora. 18 years old. Virgin. Unpopular. Hikikomori. NEET. Game addict.

The sister—Shiro. 11 years old. No friends. Anthropophobia. Hikikomori. Game addict.

……GG[3], humanity.

[End]

Is what anybody would think, if they only read this far.

However, these two are—not from this world.

In the previous world, they had set undefeated records in the rankings of over 280 games.

At the top of the rankings of any game you cared to check would be a spotless, blank space.

Just who was behind it was never identified, and that gamer had become an urban legend.

They were known only as—『Kuuhaku』.

This world was ‘Disboard’, where all wars had ceased as decreed by the [Ten Oaths].

In this world everything up to and including country borders were decided by games. By using magic which humans were neither able to use or detect, the other races cheated in their games and backed the sixteenth race ‘Imanity’ into a corner.

Even that final city had almost become a puppet government via an agent of the elves. However, these two superficially possessed neither special powers or magic ability.

With only their strength as humans, bearing the title of humanity’s strongest both in name and reality, these two were seated on the throne.

They were certainly, unmistakably, hopeless.

They were certainly, visibly, socially incompetent.

In [this world], however, these siblings were—the saviors of Imanity.

These siblings held the hope of Imanity in their hands—as the brother Sora, playing cards at the ready, spoke!!

“Hey, Steph. Where do babies come from?”

……Maybe GG is still a viable conclusion.

One of the figures standing near the two responded with a cold stare.

“……That’s really not something I want to have to say to the ones responsible for the future of Imanity……”

She had red hair and blue eyes, and was wearing a frilly dress suitable for a fantasy setting.

With fine clothing, style sense, and bearing, she was a girl in her late teens.

—Stephanie Dora. Steph, for short.

The granddaughter of the late king of Elchea, descended from a venerable line, replied.

“—Have you finally cracked?”

Correcting herself, she rectified that statement.

“Rather, that would imply you’ve been acting normal until now.”

“Hey, I’m being perfectly normal!”

“Asking something like that so normally is what’s not normal!”

“Arrrgh, you’re so dense! What I mean is, in this world there are the [Ten Oaths], right!”

The [Ten Oaths].

A set of absolute laws for this world laid down by the sole god, Tet.

It was a compact which forbade all warfare between the intelligent races of the ‘Exceed’—namely.

【1】 All bloodshed, war, and pillage is forbidden throughout the world.

【2】 All disputes are to be resolved through the outcome of games.

【3】 In games, wagers will be made on what both parties decide to be of equal value.

【4】 Unless contrary to "Three", the game content and the things wagered do not matter.

【5】 The challenged party has the right to decide the contents of the game.

【6】 "As per the Oath", the wager will be unconditionally adhered to.

【7】 All matters for group conflicts will be decided by a representative.

【8】 If cheating is detected during a game, it will be regarded as a defeat.

【9】 The above rules are unconditionally everlasting, upheld in the name of God.

【10】 Everyone should get along while playing games.

“……What about them?”

“I mean, bloodshed is forbidden, isn’t it. So how do you ‘make children’?”

“……May I ask why you’re asking that now?”

“I’m bored and it’s something that just popped up. But isn’t this a huge problem?”

Aware of the surrounding eyes on her, Steph leaned in to whisper in Sora’s ear.

“……In [your world], are humans born from eggs?”

The fact that Sora and Shiro had come from a ‘different world’ was a secret.

……which made having such a conversation right in front of a crowd of servants *such* a great idea.

That was why the eternally dumbfounded Steph spoke with such a frosty gaze.

“—H-hey! Don’t look down on me just because I’m a virgin!! I know perfectly well that when a boy’s pocket monster goes in and out of a girl’s secret garden, the world will turn!!”

“……Nii, that way of speaking……sounds far too much……like a virgin.....”

“If a virgin doesn’t sound like a virgin, what the heck should I sound like!?”

His 11 year old sister who was sitting on his lap reminded the king of his extreme unpopularity and that the years he'd been without a girlfriend equaled his age.

“A-anyway, doing that stuff will be inflicting an injury, right? Or at least the first time will!! So with the [Ten Oaths], how does humanity in this world breed!?”

It seemed like Steph finally understood that he was being serious. But then immediately—

“……Just let me double check, this isn’t some farce to publicly shame me, right?”

“—Seriously, thinking of something like that, what’s up with *you*?”

An eroge thought in a world without eroge.

The power of his imagination was almost admirable.

“Never mind, I’ll ask someone else later, you useless woman.”

“Wha—f,fine, I get it. I’ll explain!”

Cough cough, Steph cleared her throat.

“What constitutes as an infringing act is extremely obvious.”

“Ohh. How so?”

“It’s simple. Behavior with 'malicious intent' which goes against the Oaths—will be cancelled.”

……—huh?

“Eh, so like, real-time censorship of the brain?”

“Yes, I guess?”

This may be a fantasy world, but isn’t that going way too far.

“That was why after the [Ten Oaths] were put in place, most laws became mere window dressing. Everything that we can think of or do must either abide by the Oaths, result from mutual consent, or simply be an accident.”

“Haah……the god of this place just does what he wants.”

“He’s the only god, of course he can do what he wants.”

—Authority sufficient enough to even remake the laws of the world on a whim.

And by now—with that, everything in this world was decided by games.

“Hm……I get it. So let me ask again, why is making babies ok?”

The one who answered however was not Steph, but Shiro who was cutting the cards on his lap.

“……If mutual consent is……'conveyed’……in other, words……”

“Ah, so if it’s an act both parties agree on it won’t count as an ‘infringement’?”

The kicks Shiro had previously dealt him still fresh in his mind, Sora finally understood.

If it was Shiro, he would agree with anything she did even if it was only a subconscious agreement. No wonder.

As Shiro continued to cut the cards, Sora yawned and spoke.

“Well, I guess that makes sense. If all bloodshed was totally forbidden, there wouldn’t be any doctors or the like either.”

As he thought once again that the Oaths were at least well designed, Steph spoke to Sora.

“So rather than saying that the world functions well, it’s more like the rules are simply extremely well enforced.”

“The world 'back where we were from' wasn’t like that~……”

……Surprisingly, a world without rules can still work.

Even if it’s flawed and inconsistent.

That was probably how this world worked too before the [Ten Oaths].

“……Still, in that case, I have another question."

“What is it?”

“Why was I able to grope your boo—never mind, that’s all.”

If you say just one more word here...Steph’s razor sharp glare that conveyed this meaning shut Sora right up.

“Well, that was a very interesting talk. It was a good time killer.”

“Did you just say that all this was a waste of time!?”

This was from the other three people seated at the table, opposite a sleepy looking Sora.

They were nobles, stripped to their underwear—three portly old men.

Looking on with pity were countless spectators.

—He had almost forgotten that he was in the middle of a game.

Sora and Shiro, along with these three great lords.

They were playing a game of poker with 'everything they owned' on the line.

“……I really, really don’t want to have to see you guys naked or something……won’t you just give up?”

The three [former nobles] had just now forfeited their entire estates to Sora and Shiro.

Everything they owned, literally. Not just sundry things such as land, assets and rights, but even including possessions such as their wives and children.

They had lost all of that in just two hours, and now were left in nothing but their underwear.

“Don’t, don’t be ridiculous—if we do that we’ll have nothing left!”

“How could we accept such tyranny!”

“If we don’t turn things around we won’t even have any clothes! Don’t screw with us!”

Paying them no mind, Sora yawned as he spoke.

“……You’re the ones who started this game, and no one had intended for things to come this far. You were the ones who ended up throwing things like your family and clothes into the mix……and everything else.”

The still arguing nobles—rather, ex-nobles, shut up at Sora’s gaze.

“I even let slide your combined efforts at cheating. Be grateful.”

“……Full, house……the.....end……”

Shiro laid down her hand.

The sign that the last bastion of the nobles—their underwear had been forfeit.

—Thus.

The three nobles, leaders of the opposition to the wealth of reforms being put in place, were reduced to utter poverty.

Along with them, the movement that they had headed fell to nothing.

Part 2

Capital of Elchea, central avenue.

It connected the North, South, East and West parts of the city as well as the main road which lead to the palace, making it the busiest area of Elchea.

Having taken even the underwear of the nobles who had been opposing their agricultural reforms, they were on their way home.

"H, however much they deserved it, that was far too brutal....."

While walking along the high traffic road bustling with people and carts, Steph blurted out.

"I mean, did you really have to go as far as taking their families!?"

"They're the ones who went and wagered that of their own accord. What do you have to say about someone who's willing to bet their own wife and kids?"

Walking behind her, holding firmly onto Shiro's hand, Sora replied.

"More importantly, there're far too many people here.....S-Shiro, whatever happens, don't you let go, ok?"

".....N-n, Nii.....as well....."

The two of them spoke as they shiftily looked around and kept their heads down.

For the two hikikomori shut-ins, having to walk down that bustling main street at noon was nothing short of purgatory.

"Wasn't it you, Sora, who said to walk back?"

"I, I had something to take care of, but.....for there to be this many people....."

For the month that they had been in this world, most of their time had been spent within the palace.

As the two of them looked around suspiciously and tightened their hold on one another, Steph heaved a sigh.

"So, what are you going to do?"

"D-do what? About what?"

"All the things that you received from those three."

"Eh, ahh, nothing much."

Somehow pulling himself together, Sora replied.

"The families can do as they please. If they're willing to forgive those idiots who wagered them and go back to them, then they're free to do so. As for their assets and the like, I'll leave all of that to you and the ministers."

Their goal had been the elimination of the nobles opposing their agricultural reforms.

Stripping them naked had merely been the means of removing their power.

Sora was happy to let the state take hold of the actual fortune.

"Um, Sora.....it's my fault that I wasn't able to stop the demonstration this time, and I'm sorry you two had to be bothered by it in the end, but I can't help thinking...this method is going to leave grudges."

With the knowledge they had brought from their world, Sora and Shiro sought to rapidly revive the nation.

Having been in this world for only a month, the two of them also had the potential to blunder due to their unfamiliarity with the culture.

To avoid such happenings, they merely dictated policy and left the actual running of things to the ministers.

Their go between was Steph, who had been educated as a member of the royal family.

—Was how things went.

They avoided the troubles that inherently came with government.

One month ago, this conversation had taken place—

"We'd just stipulate policies and guidelines. The actual implementation would be left to you, Steph, and the ministers. That being said, if anyone had a problem with what we're doing, bring them to us. We'll strip them and toss them out naked—isn't that what we'd agreed on?"

"That's why! That way of doing things is far too thuggish!"

"Don't worry. Controlling through fear is far too much trouble, but it's fine doing it once or twice."

Although to be honest at this rate, things would end up becoming another Great Purge.

"Actually considering that we've been on the throne for a whole month, it's surprising that this is the first time we've had to do this."

Such large scale agricultural and industrial reforms would naturally bring about conflicts of interest.

Nobles would revolt and guilds would conspire. Those sorts of annoying events you'd see in simulation games.

However, they had left things to Steph and the ministers precisely in order to avoid tripping such troublesome flags.

That there were so few rebellions after the first month was no small wonder—

"Well.....we've managed to keep things suppressed up to now."

".....Suppressed?"

"Many nobles were initially opposed to the agricultural reforms that Sora had presented. Fortunately House Auruo and House Bild are closely allied with House Dora, so with their help we were able to manage things behind the scenes."

".....Eh? Ah, right."

"With data obtained from large-scale experiments in royal territories, we were able to convince many of our major nobles. With that the more minor nobles were slowly swayed over as well, but.....there were some who simply wouldn't budge. Those three today were the big shots amongst them, so it shouldn't happen again. Still, you should take care not to—what is it?"

Interrupting Steph who was speaking so eloquently, Sora placed a hand on her forehead.

".....Hm, it doesn't seem like you have a fever. What the- Steph, you just said something really smart!"

For some reason, Sora seemed terribly shocked.

"Is something wrong!? I, I'm sorry for not noticing earlier, I'll take you to a doctor immediately—"

".....Um, aren't you being just a bit far too impolite?"

Seeing Steph's shoulders trembling, Sora cried out.

"No, I mean—it's you we're talking about, Steph!!"

"Yes it is, what of it!?"

Sora closed his eyes and shook his head.

"No, wait, wait, give me a sec, it can't be....."

He resembled a hardcore physicist who was seeing a real ghost right before his eyes.

Thinking, "This absolutely cannot be."

He swallowed painfully.

He spoke the incredibly hard to accept truth.

"I can't believe it, but.....could it be.....Steph, you aren't actually an idiot!?"

Still harboring doubts, Sora cried out the inescapable reality.

"Y-you.....I graduated top of the class from the most prestigious academy in the country you know!?"

"But I mean—just look at yourself!"

Stephanie Dora.

The only granddaughter of the late king of Elchea, a very dignified lady was now.

Wearing a collar, along with dog ears and a tail.

A leash attached to the collar trailed in Shiro's hand as they walked.

Along the heart of the city, down the main street.

"If you had half a brain there'd be no way you'd let something like this happen!!"

"The person who did this to me has no business saying any such thing!!!"

Indeed, this morning Steph had predictably lost in Blackjack to Sora.

"Then, for today, you'll be a dog."

And that had been the super appropriate price she had paid.

And just as predictably, as they walked down the central street of Elchea in such a manner.

Every passerby was staring at them.

It should be noted that in the mansion earlier, Steph had been in this get-up the entire time.

"C-couldn't you have come up with anything better!?"

At Steph's cry as her anger returned far too late, Sora and Shiro thought.

—There hadn't been much change from before.

"......Steph, shake....."

Shiro held out her hand.

With a flop, Steph placed her front paw—er, right hand on Shiro's hand.

"U, uuu.....why can't I resist at allllll!"

"You were explaining things so diligently just a while ago, right? That's the rule of this world."

—Of the [Ten Oaths], number 【6】: "As per the Oath", the wager will be unconditionally adhered to.

"......Steph, down....."

As Steph proceeded to lie face down on the street, she lamented aloud.

"Uuuuuuuu! Why couldn't I win!"

At that, Sora breathed a sigh of relief.

"Ah, so you really didn't know.....thank goodness, it's the usual Steph."

"Thinking that you just used "Steph" as an insult was my imagination, right!? My imagination, right!?"

Ignoring Steph's protests, Sora took out his mobile phone.

In any case, her hard work that was beyond their expectations was indeed quite unexpected.

Taking the ministers' reports, they had drawn up an app graph of the country's data.

It appeared that the instructed reforms had managed to proceed without too much trouble.

Although the size of the dairy areas they had managed to secure was somewhat disappointing, if it worked the population's transition should balance things out.

At the same time, they had been able to ease the employment problem somewhat—he put down a note to check that into the task scheduler.

He proceeded to check off items such as 'agricultural reform', 'industrial reform', and 'financial reform'.

"......Still, in the long term, this is only a stop-gap....."

However much they fully tried to use the knowledge they had brought with them, fundamentally their available resources and national land size had not changed.

Not to mention it would take at least half a year before the results of the agricultural reforms bore fruit.

Even if they wanted to go as far as attempting to introduce future tech, the country simply didn't have the necessary raw materials.

"I guess our only choice is—'reclaiming the land'."

In other words.

The time had finally come to mobilize and win back their borders.

The question was—where should they begin.....

"....."

Lost in thought, Sora fell silent. Shiro, perhaps thinking the same thoughts, was also quiet.

Walking before them, attached to the collar, Steph naturally also quietened down.

But. Before long, she couldn't stand the stares anymore.

"S, Sora. Everyone's staring really hurts, so let's at least talk."

At Steph's protest, Sora noticed something strange.

".....Nn? Don't you think there's something off about the way everyone's looking?"

"Seeing someone in a get-up like this, isn't that obvious!?"

"No, not that.....somehow, don't you think they look frightened?"

Sora noticed a subtle incongruity in the stares being sent at Steph.

They were not the amused eyes of people looking on at some funny cosplay—

In fact, rather, they stared at Sora's group as if seeing something they'd never imagined.

"Since the king of Elchea is taking around 'someone who resembles a werebeast', it's only natural."

.....Huh?

"Wait, what did you say just now?"

"For the king of Elchea to do something like this, anyone would—"

"No! Not that part!"

"Wait, Steph with those ears and a tail resembles—a 'werebeast'.....was it?"

Sora's brain instantaneously began recalling all the information he possessed thus far.

—The 14th race of the Exceed: 'Werebeasts'.

With the largest territory, they were the third greatest superpower in the world, the 'Eastern Union'.

Although information was sketchy, they had superb physical capabilities and senses.

It was rumored that they even had a sort of [sixth sense], an intuition even able to read the heart.

"—Steph, I'd like an answer as fast as possible."

"Hah? W-what is it?"

"These werebeasts—do they have girls like Steph now, with ears and a tail?"

".....I don't know why you're limiting it to girls, but—"

They do—is what Steph was about to say.

"Almost all werebeast girls have such bodies, you know?"

".....So what you're saying is, this country, the 'Eastern Union'—"

Confirming, Sora swallowed hard.

"Is filled with girls who look almost exactly like humans, who have animal ears and a tail and fuzzy paws...such an Eden of the ultimate pretty animals exists in this world—is that what you're saying?"

You're saying the place named the 'Eastern Union'—is such an Arcadia[4]?

"Alright that's it that Paradise is mine we're going to conquer all those

kemonomimi[5] ! Immediately! Now!"

Drawing his phone as if unsheathing a sword, Sora opened the task scheduler!

Seeing him enter 'Conquer kemonomimi kingdom- To do: Now', Steph burst out.

"Hey, w-what are you on to! Our own country isn't even stable yet!"

At that 'mad king' who was suddenly raring to pick a fight with the world's third greatest power.

But Sora would not be swayed.

"Silence! I will obtain both the land and the kemonomimis! It serves both my own and the national interests, so well, who are you to try and block this perfect plan!"

Then looking around as if searching for something, Sora yelled out.

"Which way to the Eastern Union!? Call a carriage right now!!"

However, as Sora began to run off alone.

His sister, holding his hand, muttered one word.

"....."Information"....."

"Uu—guuu.....!"

His self-proclaimed 'perfect plan' collapsed with depressing ease.

—Yes. They had already thought about all this before.

And after they had been crowned, in the month since that day when they declared war on the world.

Being reminded of why they had yet to launch an attack up to today, Sora fell silent.

"G, gngnnn.....certainly, if we don't clear this problem, we can't make a move....."

As both Sora and Shiro retreated back to their own thoughts, silence fell again.

However, after that outburst it was troubling.

The silence was hard on Steph again.

"Uh- uhm, Sora, could you tell me why I lost in the Blackjack game this morning—"

Unable to take it anymore, Steph brought up a topic.

.....But there was no reply.

Steph looked back. However.

".....eh?"

The leash that Shiro should have been carrying was dragging along the ground.

The two who should have been right behind her were nowhere to be found.

"Eh? Huh, they.....left?"

Standing alone amidst quietly heard laughter, a cold wind blew.

Part 3

"……De...licious……"

They had just come out from a library situated in one of the labyrinthine alleys branching off from Elchea's central avenue.

Then they had visited a café, and now Sora and Shiro's hands were full with books, donuts and tea.

"Despite our plans to deal with the food shortage……it seems the stockpiles really are doing badly."

From the central avenue they had entered an open plaza, where they had brought the donuts and tea.

The plaza didn't have the vibrance one would expect, however.

Nor was there any mistaking the shopkeepers' expressions.

With just a look, they told plenty about Elchea's current situation.

Analyzing the situation, in Sora and Shiro's original world, rioting and looting would have broken out by now.

"How was it over there, Shiro?"

"……Nn. It seems……there really...was no harvest……"

"As we thought. Jeez, what the hell's going on. What's with this country?"

"—What's.....strange.....is—"

"The nerve of you guuuuuuuuuyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyssssssssssssssss!!!!!!"

Panting, shoulders heaving, Steph (still dressed like a dog) screamed out.

"Ah, Steph. Where'd you go. We were looking for you, y'know?"

"'Ah' my ass!! 'Ah'!? Don't tell me you forgot!? Are you telling me that leaving me in the middle of the city while wearing a collar and dressed like a dog wasn't harassment or even teasing, you 'just forgot'!?"

Steph cried with teary eyes.

As if offering a supplicating prayer she clutched at Sora's feet.

"Please! Grant me this single wish! Let me hit you a good one just this once!! I won't ask for anything else ever again!!"

"W, well……Shiro smelled something good and was pretty out of it for a while. There was no way I could let go, and I was sure she would be holding on to the leash, then before I knew it, you were gone……"

"……Steph.....sorry.....……Sit."

As Shiro gave a thumbs up and spoke with her mouth stuffed full of donut, Sora continued.

"So, well, Shiro had no ill intentions either, so please forgive us."

"Saying 'please forgive us', then ordering me to sit really kills the sincerity you know!?"

While 'sitting' like a dog, Steph pointed at Sora and declared.

"First tell me why I lost!! If you don't, I won't be convinced!!"

"Hm……so rather than requesting to be released, you want an explanation?"

"—……Huh?"

"……Steph……you actually……like it?"

"T-there's—no way in hell!! Are you making fun of me!?"

But there wasn't a chance either Sora or Shiro would miss that moment's hesitation.

"Whoaa, I thought something like that only happened in eroge……"

Considering this came from the one who had forced her into it, there wasn't much left to be said.

Steph, today, was in top form.

She had never once cursed the god who had forbidden all violence.

Yet being pressured by that intense glare, Sora relented.

"Alright, alright, I'll tell you……'card counting'."

He never ceased eating, however.

"Card……eh, what?"

“Card counting. Simply put, it’s assigning a number to cards. For example 2-6 is 1, 10 or higher is -1, and 7-9 are 0.”

“……? What do you gain by that?”

Seeing all of that had completely flown over her head, Sora stated bluntly.

“You can 'predict the next card'.”

“—-Huh?”

As Steph suspiciously pondered whether that was magic, Sora leisurely elaborated.

“By keeping track of the cards which have been dealt, one can anticipate the cards which are left, and it’s possible to 'mathematically predict the probability of which cards will come next'. If you can reliably do that, you won’t lose, right?”

“Ha, haah~.....”

It appeared the idea of using ‘math’ in games was something new for Steph.

She seemed to have forgotten both her loss and her being forced to ‘sit’ at the moment, being simply lost in awe.

As if wanting to write everything down, she took out a notepad.

In the midst of doing so however, she noticed something.

“W, wait a moment!! Isn’t that just cheating!?”

Sora refuted her point with a cool face.

“If playing smart is cheating, then does that make something like predicting your opponent’s next move in chess cheating as well?”

“T-that’s……”

—In Sora’s previous world, card counting was indeed considered a form of cheating, but he decided not to mention that.

“Speaking of cheating, your [deliberate shuffle tracking] would be a far more appropriate case.”

————eh.

“Y-you noticed!?”

Sora’s wry face seemed to ask if she really thought he hadn’t.

“It’s something Shiro’s already caught me doing countless times. Well, thanks to that it was easy for me to count as well.”

Sora, who had at heart truly wished to lose, spoke with a sigh.

Naturally transitioning from ‘sit’ to ‘lie down’, Steph flopped onto the ground.

Not only had her cheating been uncovered, it had been taken advantage of as well.

According to the [Ten Oaths], simply being caught should have already resulted in her loss.

Yet for her [cheating having been used to actively beat her] caused Steph, while lying down, to wet the ground with her tears.

However, something suddenly flashed through her mind.

—If so, what if they played a game which "truly was reliant on pure luck"?

Wouldn’t she have a chance of winning then?

“……Fufufu……Sora! We’re having another game!!”

Still lying on the ground, Steph looked up and shouted defiantly.

It was a...well—extremely sorrowful sight.

“You……right after what happened this morning? What are you betting for?”

It would have to be something sufficient to make Sora accept in spite of himself.

“The same as this morning, ‘Make Sora a riajuu’.”

“Alright let’s do it (immediate answer).”

What Steph offered caused all of his compassion to scatter to the winds.

“……Nii, game....details…..”

“Shiro!! Do you think there’s even a million to one chance your Onii-chan would lose to Steph!?”

“……I will make it, one in a billion……no, a……trillion.....”

If the siblings were together, whoever the opponent was, they could see through everything.

“……Shiro, will, play also……as…… 『Kuuhaku』.”

—That meant Steph wouldn't be playing against a half.

If Steph carried out her challenge, it would be against the full might of "Imanity's strongest gamer."

Not a problem, she thought.

Ability is meaningless in a game of pure chance.

Victory would always be 50/50!

"……If Steph, loses……you'll have to.....listen to……one order, of mine."

Steph probably—didn't see.

The true face of Imanity's strongest gamers.

Although seemingly expressionless, the clear fire which burned deep within their eyes.

"Fufu, I don't mind. Then let's do this, the game will be—!!"

With a flourish, Steph pointed to the corner of the road.

"A guessing game on—whether the next person to step past will be a man or a woman!"

Hearing the game, Shiro thought for a moment then answered.

"……The game.....will be, best……out of……ten. 【Acciente】."

"As you wish! 【Acciente】!"

Steph was enthusiastic, but Sora.

Heaving a sigh, he looked at Steph with distant eyes.

"W-why——why why whyyyyyyyyyyy!?"

The result was……9-1.

Needless to say, it was a crushing defeat for Steph.

"T-this is wrong! Winning 90% in a game of chance, what did you do!?"

Sora, who had never doubted their win, explained with genuine regret.

“—Did you think that everyone was just aimlessly walking past that corner?”

“……Eh?”

“I’ve been watching the interval of people passing through while we were having tea this whole time. By taking that trend and factoring it in with the male-female ratio Shiro calculated factoring population density, employment rate and work content, it’s possible to determine the male-female ratio of people purposefully passing through here.”

“……V.....”

Shiro, who had memorized all of the appropriate data and made all the calculations off of them mentally, made a V sign.

Seeing that V, Steph finally felt something akin to hostility……but more importantly—

“A-a-aren’t you taking this way overboard!?”

Going to these absurd lengths just to guess the gender of people appearing from a corner, just how serious are these two!

——But for Sora and Shiro, when it came to games, that was a foolish question.

If asked ‘how far will you go’.

There could only be one answer——‘[as far as it takes]’.

“……And, so……”

Shiro, victorious, announced her request as per the bet.

“Steph’s……underwear, confis……cate……”

“——heh!?”

“W-what!?”

However, she had already agreed under the Oath.

“Hiii—w-wait, please, change the request!!”

Number six of the [Ten Oaths], "As per the Oath", the wager will be unconditionally adhered to.

An absolute agreement—there were none who could go against it.

Steph proceeded to remove her panties, protesting all the while.

Paying absolutely no heed, however, Shiro took her panties. As a result, Steph was now crouched down on all fours, nopan[6] and face completely red.

The one panicking all over, however, was Sora.

“Hey, m-my little sister! Isn’t this very dangerous in various ways!?”

“……Shiro is……an 11……year old child, so……I wouldn’t, know……”

Saying so, she proceeded to wear Steph’s panties on her head.

Remaining expressionless, she put a finger to her lips and tilted her head.

“Wha—stop with the innocent child act, will you!? It’s way too bright!!!”

Not to mention, the sight of that girl with panties on her head was drawing the attention of everyone passing by.

As a result, Steph’s panties were displayed for all the world to see……

How—how terrifying. What a terrifying child—Shiro!!

However, Sora, feeling a sense of mercilessness from his younger sister, spoke.

“H, hey, for some reason, Shiro, you seem particularly severe today? Are you in a bad mood?”

“……Not, really……?”

His asking that question, however, seemed to have put her in one.

Looking bored, Shiro responded with lidded eyes.

When Steph had risen against Sora, who had commanded her to ‘fall in love’.

She had requested not for ‘the command’s cancellation’, but for ‘Sora to become a respectable person’.

……the reason behind that should have been obvious with a bit of thinking.

“……Fuu.……”

Still in a bad mood, that 11 year old girl went back to reading.

Yet it seemed she had been the only one who had had that on her mind.

—Meanwhile.

Still dressed as a dog, and now missing her underwear, was Steph.

"Fu, fufu.....this is nothing.....that day when I lost to Sora, I had already given up my chastity....."

Father, mother, grandfather.....

Your Stephanie has been stained.

Fufu, ufufufufufu. As Steph laughed under her breath, she turned to face Sora.

"H, hey Shiro, as I thought, this really feels bad—I mean, that look of hers is scary."

".....she's, fine....."

She really didn't seem fine, but Shiro asserted so with panties still firmly on her head.

All of a sudden, Steph fell to the ground again while pressing down her skirt.

As she once again watered the ground with her crying, something flashed through her mind again.

Strange—there's absolutely no way a true game of pure chance doesn't exist in this world.

(That's right. In that last game.....Sora and Shiro were off once as well!)

A prediction is, in the end, still just a prediction.

Precisely because of that unreliability, Shiro had specified it was to be 'best out of ten'.

If so——!

"S-s-Sora! A, a-another match, another!!"

Declining to stand up, probably due to her lack of panties, Steph said this in a flustered voice.

"I, I pass.....say, are you really all right?"

Already being forced to act like a dog, now with her underwear removed.

Pushing the boundary any further than this would definitely turn things into something R18.

But Steph spoke strongly.

"I don't mind!! If temporary defeats like this are the price for bringing you two down, it's far too cheap!!"

A glimpse of how Elchea had been pushed this far to the brink could be seen.

".....Is, is that so. Then with the same conditions, what's the game?"

"We'll guess how many seconds it takes for that bird over there to fly away, and the closest is the winner—and we'll [only play once]!!"

With another flourish, Steph pointed.

"Craw."

Perched on a house roof was a white rat—or maybe a pigeon.

(You, 『Kuuhaku』, who won't accept a defeat...when facing a single game of chance—what will you do!)

In all likelihood, they simply wouldn't accept the challenge.

But even that's fine. If this will allow her to close the gap between them—!

Yet contrary to Steph's expectations, Sora nodded leisurely.

"All right. Same wager as before. 【Acciente】—yes, what?"

"Eh, um, 【Acciente】.....th-then—30 seconds!"

Caught off guard by his ready acceptance, Steph hesitated momentarily.

—Still, she was certain that there was no way the bird would remain there for more than a minute.

Therefore, she simply hedged her bets and conservatively guessed the middle value.

Steph looked up expectantly.

However, as if he wasn't even listening, Sora spoke as he picked up a rock.

"Then—three seconds for me."

He then immediately made an overhead throw.

"......huh!?"

The rock, thrown at full force, whizzed right past the pigeon.

With an explosive flap, the startled bird took off.

"......Right.....it's Nii's...victory."

Without even looking up from her book, Shiro spoke, panties still firmly on her head.

Steph raised her voice in fierce protest.

"W-w-wait just a moment!!! Isn't that cheating!?"

Sora was fully aware of his own actions, however.

"I don't believe any rule had been set which [disallowed provoking the bird into flight]?"

"Wha—"

"If you don't properly set the rules of the game, things like this will happen."

How, how childish—however much, aren't these siblings far too childish!?

Sora, going back to his book and leaning into his chair, spoke seriously.

"—There is [no such thing as luck] in this world."

"……eh?"

No...such thing?

At that far too sensible view, Steph frowned.

"Rules, premises, wager, physiological state, ability, timing, condition……all of these countless 'invisible parameters' have already decided victory or defeat before the game has even begun. There

is nothing left to chance."

Chance.

It was nothing more than a word used for an unforeseen, unpredicted result.

"For example, let's see……let's say a card was drawn out of a deck."

His eyes never leaving his book, Sora continued speaking fluently.

"What're the chances that the card is the 'Ace of Spades'?"

"……Um, there are 52 cards in a deck, so it should be 1/52."

"That's how it would be normally. Now however, what if you were drawing from the bottom of a new pack?"

"……huh?"

"The initial order of cards in a new pack is set. In other words, when you take a fresh pack without jokers, if you draw the card from the bottom of the deck you will be guaranteed an 'Ace of Spades'."

"Eh, b-but……"

Steph tried desperately to refute him.

"That's right, I hadn't told you it was a new pack—so you didn't know, did you?

However, as if saying that was the point, Sora kept going.

"That's exactly it. If you're aware, that '1.92%' becomes '100%'. The one who doesn't know will blame bad luck, and the one who does know will walk away with the definite win."

He spoke with a sigh.

"Do you get it? There's always a way to win a game. That was why you lost to me in Blackjack. That's also the reason [Imanity has been losing until now]—"

And then—

With a sullen face, Sora declared.

"—The reason why we're being 'checkmated'."

……eh?

Checkmated?

“This past month, we’ve been going through countless books that cover the whole country, but there’s hardly anything with information on the other races. There’s not an exploit to be found. Good grief, just what have you guys been doing……”

“Eh, uhm……what, do you mean?”

“—Hm, did you think we were simply spending the past month in our room playing games?”

“Most obviously, of course, right?”

Steph asserted without a doubt.

Well, whatever, Sora muttered as he proceeded.

“For example, let’s say we challenged the nekomimi kingdom—er, the Eastern Union.”

Evidently he hadn’t given up on that yet.

“However, about all that Imanity knows about them is that werebeasts have some sort of sixth sense.”

“Y, yes……something like being able to read the heart, or the like……”

“If they can do that then bluffs will fall flat, and bargaining would also be impossible.”

Ranked dead last at 16th of the 16 races of the ‘Exceed’, Imanity had no magic powers or special abilities whatsoever.

Meaning that in order to fight and win against the other races who could use ‘paranormal abilities’—

“Without adequate ‘intel’ on the enemy, we can’t even begin to consider a game.”

Yet in spite of that—the information Imanity had on the other races was far too little.

Naturally, since if they were found out it’d be a disadvantage, the other races would be hiding their abilities.

For all that however, it was still far too little.

Their complaint against the books to be found in the libraries stemmed from that fact.

Nothing is known of the opponent’s games, nor their abilities.

But the other side knew perfectly well just what Imanity was capable of—meaning.

The playing field of those ‘invisible parameters’ was completely uneven.

If they went ahead and fought without that vital information, it'd end in 'certain defeat'.

For the exact same reason Steph was always completely crushed by Sora—an undoubtable, definite loss.

"And so, we've been completely unable to find an opening to determine our angle of attack and just been sitting around the past month."

Closing his book, Sora said so.

"S-still."

Sora's cold words denounced the fruitless efforts of her grandfather.

Unable to let that go unchallenged, Steph painfully retorted.

"E, even so, if nothing is ever done we won't ever begin!"

But.

Sora's words held no emotion in particular.

"Hey……if we screw up [even once], [everything's over]."

Yet his voice rang with a pressure equal to that which held Steph down on the ground.

"—This is how far gone we are. Don't forget."

—One moment.

It truly was for just one moment.

Yet in that moment Steph clearly saw, the 'frustration' which fluttered across Sora's face.

Such behavior was rarely displayed, so the truth was easily looked past.

Yet it was a fact now that the fate of Imanity, a full three million people, were burdened upon the shoulders of these siblings.

The ones who had indirectly bested the Elves, without a doubt the greatest gamers Imanity had.

Those two had said—'checkmated'.

The meaning, the weight.

Only now did Steph begin to understand the pressure the two must feel.

—That by their own two hands, they could be the *end of millions of lives*.

Carrying such a heavy burden—realizing that, Steph could only draw in a breath.

Sora began fiddling with his task scheduler once more.

"—Even after all this we don't have a single 'key' which would lead to a breakthrough. Sheesh, what to do"

Being so nonchalant though, they had some tremendous nerve.

Steph felt a chill—

.....When.

A shadow fell, and turned the surrounding day to night

".....What? Why's it suddenly.....dar—"

Sora glanced around.

Even Shiro opened her lidded eyes, and took the donut from her mouth.

Looking up, the clear blue sky was no more.

Instead, as if gouged straight from the earth—a huge rock was floating there.

"Wha, what the hell is that.....?"

Wow, so Laputa really exists.

Such thoughts flitted across Sora's mind.

No matter how you looked at it, it was ripped straight from a certain anime.

A giant island, floating in the sky.

—Come to think of it.

The moment they had come to this world, as they fell through the sky, they had seen plenty of such drifting islands.

.....So in this world, they're actually a familiar sight.

Only Sora and Shiro had been surprised; everyone else was just disinterestedly walking down the

road.

"......This world really is something else.....this pace is also a 'bit much'."

As the two of them continued staring up in a daze, Steph finally noticed.

"Ah, this is your first time seeing it isn't it."

She then followed their gaze.

"That, is 'Avant Heim'—one of the Phantasma species."

Now that she mentioned it, if one looked closely.

What had looked like just a bare rock, actually had fins sticking out of it.

It looked—almost like a giant whale, and yet not quite.

A question sprang to mind.

"—Those in this world who are allowed to infringe on things like the *right to sunlight* and *right to airspace*—those 'Phantasma'?"

"Yes. One of the 'second ranked' of the Exceed[16 Races]."

The Exceed.

Prescribing to the 'Ten Oaths' god had set down, the 16 intelligent species.

Pointing towards the sky, or rather the (for now) Laputa, Sora yelled.

"Is that really an *intelligent lifeform*!? How the heck does it play games, hell how does it even communicate in the first place!? If Pa** had said not only 'Laputa exists' but 'Laputa talks', even his old man would have looked at him with pitiful eyes!!"

".....I don't get half of what you just said, but well, it's useless."

Steph spoke flatly.

"Imanity can't even win against the 'Flügel' who live on it."

"Flügel—A, Aah, 'Avant Heim'.....So that's it?"

Laputa continued on past the street.

As Sora watched the Phantasma 'Avant Heim' drift away.

It had disappeared from his mind due to the surprise, but.

Something written in the books he had been reading before sprang up.

—Ranked 6th of the 'Exceed'—'Flügel'.

In the former Great war they had been created by the gods to kill gods, the vanguard. They were born for battle.

After the 'Ten Oaths', their combat capability had ostensibly been sealed.

Despite a lifespan bordering on eternal, and their high magic affinity, their only territory remained a soaring sky city.

Because of that they did not participate in the border betting 'country gambling' but due to their thirst for knowledge in order to collect information from tribes all over the world, meaning books, they often played games on a personal individual scale.

For Imanity, whose betting pool was now limited.

They were one of those who could be led out by the bait of Sora and Shiro's 'knowledge from another world'.

They had been the race Sora had kept an eye out on foremost since coming to this world.

However.

"……Getting those Flügel on our side would be great and all, but we don't have any way to contact them huh."

More sought after even than—the kemonomimis.

Information with which they could take on all the other races—the 'Bounty of the Flügel' was beyond priceless.

Imanity in this world however possessed no flight technology.

There were no means by which to contact 'Avant Heim'.

And with all said, publicly announcing the 'knowledge of another world' Sora and Shiro possessed was also no good.

It was still too early to reveal that trump card Elchea—that Sora and co possessed.

Hearing Sora's troubled mutters, 'Eh?' went Steph.

"If you have business with the Flügel, there's one nearby, you know?"

.....———

"—What, was that?"

"Rather, I guess.....it's better to say there's one staying here?"

No, wait, wait, wait, Sora cried.

"In all the libraries of the country, I never once read something about that!?"

"Well, the Flügel had already lifted any such noticeable books from Elchea after all."

—Faintly, Sora recalled a sense of vertigo.

However his lidded-eyed sister must be feeling the same thing.

Barely able to stand, he urged her on.

".....T, tell us more."

"Um.....Five years ago, one of the Flügel came to the nation's largest library, the 'Great National Library of Elchea', and ended up winning all the books in there.....was what happened."

I seee~~♪

So that's why Elchea has barely any information at all, I guess~~♥

"You idiots [bet knowledge and practically put it on a silver platter], are your heads screwed on right!? Rather, [who's was it to bet] in the first place!?"

If they had no knowledge—no 'information', they could not hope to overcome the other countries.

Betting like that would be similar to throwing away your sword and shield before a fight.

To say the least, 'pure stupidity'.

Even passersby stopped in surprise, as the target of that outburst, Steph, attempted a flustered response.

"T-th, the one who gambled was my grandfather, he thought it'd be a g, good idea....."

But Sora would not be stopped.

"What had been the 'bet'!?"

"Uh, umumumum, i-if he won, 'that Flügel would become our ally' or so I heard!"

—So he had been trying to obtain a friend with more knowledge than Imanity.

To Sora, those were actually not bad conditions.

Yes, not bad at all. What was bad was—

"So he went ahead and lost, depriving us of basically all our knowledge!!!!!?????"

Tearing at his head, Sora shrieked at Steph.

"Did he not at least consider the consequences if he lost!? Make copies of the manuscripts or anything!?"

"......T, that's, um.....due to the budget....."

"Budget!? What the HELL did the budget have to do with this!!"

Panties still firmly on her head, Shiro whispered to her unknowing brother.

"......Nii.....Elchea.....paper, tech.....and, literacy.....rate."

"Eh, ah, r-right."

As someone who lives in modern Japan, this may sound unbelievable but.

The literacy rate back in 15th century Europe was—barely 10%.

They knew from the data that Elchea was similar in that respect.

Added to that without the technology to mass produce paper, making manuscripts would have been a massive budgetary constraint—

"......Steph, after we've translated some memos into your language, please give them the highest priority."

Heaving a heavy sigh, Sora stood up.

"Ah, of course.....what memos?"

"Blueprints for 'paper mass production' and the 'printing press'....."

At that however Shiro, with lidded eyes and panties firmly on head, doled out blame.

"......Nii......cheating, again."

"Sorry Shiro, but not having this would be [more strange]."

Entering another task into his mobile, Sora sighed again.

So Steph, who had a personal library collection.

Was actually really well educated for these times.....but.

In this world where everything was decided by games.

"How in the world do you play games if you *can't even read or write*. Is humanity even trying?"

"Knowing six or 18 languages like you guys is far more weird!"

"Don't be stupid! If we're going to face off against foreign powers, knowing six languages should be the [bare minimum]!"

Finishing all that in one breath, Sora was left panting.

"—N, never, mind. Steph."

"Y-yes?"

"According to our references, the [Flügel traditionally, only play, one game]."

Regarding the Flügel—the information about the game was missing.

Therefore Sora had only really been looking for a confirmation, and Steph nodded.

"Then, the next task, is clear."

He slid his finger across the scheduler—then entered.

"If we make good speed, by leaving now we can be back by evening. Steph, call a carriage."

"Eh, alright?"

As he spoke, Sora once again checked the new task entered into the phone.

—'Retrieve Imanity's knowledge'.

".....Well, guess I may as well add this too."

Sora's fingers danced again.

"Uh, 'obtain one Flügel'.....should do it."

Just earlier.

The race Steph had declared it was 'impossible to win against'.

Ranked 6th—the god killers.

He was quite comfortable about it too.

As Steph stared stunned at Sora's back, who had declared 'it could be done'.

Sora, taking Shiro's hand, walked forth.

Chapter 2 - Unexpected Move/One Move

Part 1

An hour passed since the departure of the carriage.

They were in the suburban area, quite a distance away from the heart of Elchea. Nevertheless, after passing by what seemed to be a school dormitory built on a hinterland, they arrived at their destination, "The National Library of Elchea".

Dismounting from the carriage, Sora looked up and blurted a word out.

".....Humongous..."

The first impression the building gave off was akin to that of the Library of Congress, located in Washington, D.C.

It was the largest library in Sora's world, where millions of books were stored. Currently, the building ahead of them was not inferior.

A beautiful and luxurious masterpiece, rivaling the King City in Elchea.

Looking at the magnificent library, people couldn't help but re-evaluate their views on the human species of this world.

Although it was a majestic library,—

".....In the end.....it was all easily taken away...."

"Guu, guuu....."

Wearing underwear on her head, Shiro spouted out these piercing words.

Steph (dog, nopan) could only lower her head in silence.

"St, stop reminiscing about the past already! Also, I have a question!"

Steph suddenly spoke up, using a heavy tone.

"Okay, what is it, then? Stephanie-san."

"Haven't I told you that challenging against unfamiliar races is very dangerous? Moreover, the opponent is The Heavenly Winged, who are ranked sixth. Is it really okay for us to fight against that kind of monster without any preparation!?"

.....She probably felt that this question was appropriate.

But to Sora, it reaffirmed her position as being the usual Steph.

".....It's alright."

"—Eh? Wh, why?"

"I.....in order to win in Word Connector, no amount of knowledge can help you."

"EH?"

"Never mind, let's go."

Opening the pair of entrance doors, they entered the library.

Inside the library, there were bookshelves piled up against the wall and ceiling, inevitably defying the laws of gravity.

There were numerous light orbs floating in the air and bookshelves that were tens of meters tall, constructing a maze-like situation filled with a fantasy-like atmosphere.

"How amazing.....sorry, I must apologize, the human species is rather incredible in this world."

".....Un....."

Sora couldn't help but feel dizzy just by imagining the amount of books stored here. Even Shiro was dumbfounded.

Collecting such a large amount of books was by no means easy.

Even if it was in their original world, having that many books in any library would be rare.

But Steph made an apologetic expression before saying—

"Uh.....unfortunately, the books here weren't really stockpiled by humans."

".....Why?"

"I guess when this library was taken away, the books in here increased, that.....when I came here as a student, the books weren't even one percent of all this."

".....The admiration I momentarily had for humankind is now gone."

——However, if you thought about it, it was simply impossible.

Because it was impossible for humans to create bookshelves that defied the laws of gravity.

"Oh.....okay, so where can we meet the Angel-sama?"

Walking past the awe-inspiring library books, a light suddenly shot downwards.

They all shifted their gaze towards the light source——before standing still as if they were frozen.

——They saw an [Angel]

A body that exuded an overwhelming sense of presence.

There was a girl, who had a geometrical pattern of light resembling a halo on her head.

From her waist appeared wings that radiated a faint glow, and that by an aerodynamic point of view, were too small to allow the body to float.

Her hair was flowing even though they were in a windless indoor room——

And whenever her hair swayed, it would reflect light like a prism, almost resembling a rainbow.

Her eyes were slightly open, but when Sora made eye contact with her.

Sora felt [Death], for the first time since he came into this world.

When he stared into her eyes——he could feel that there was a killing intent, making Sora feel that if this fairy-like girl did so much as lift a finger, it would kill him, regardless of any attempt of his to escape or beg for mercy.

(This is The Heavenly Flügel Winged?—ranked sixth?)

—In order to annihilate God——to wipe out God from the world, a weapon created by Gods.

(This would probably be how it feels like to have machine guns pointed at you.)

Even the emotionless Shiro huddled her body and firmly grasped onto Sora's arm.

Steph sat on the floor, her teeth chattering, fighting back against the instinct to cry out.

The existence that was causing all of this fright was silent, focusing intently on Sora and company.

"————....."

Just when everyone was still frozen in place.

The Angel——The Heavenly Flügel Winged girl.

Slowly opened her amber-colored eyes——and said.

"Excuse me, the Person there, come Me library for What?" [7]

——.....This sentence.

"Wow.....that ruined the atmosphere."

Steph suddenly fainted, while Sora (who was going to suffer from a systemic collapse) reluctantly muttered this.....

Part 2

"Gu, erm, let me introduce myself, I am—"

After Sora regathered his spirit, he began talking, so as to set the pace.

However——

"Elchea's new King & Queen. Sora-sama and Shiro-sama, right?"

The Flügel
The Heavenly Winged girl replied first.

".....Oh, so you know about us already."

"Well, it's because I signed up for human newspapers. Cong——ah! Congratulations to both of you for becoming the new king."

".....She corrected herself....."

Shiro (underwear on head) criticized, but her hand still clutched onto Sora's arm tightly, refusing to let go.

——Even though violence was prohibited in this world, she was still afraid.

It was like administering anesthetic to a lion, yet the person was still afraid to approach the slumbering beast.

But it did not seem this way to Sora.

"I say, that manner of speaking reminds me of a certain well-known figure. If that is not your normal style of speaking, could you refrain from doing that?"

Sora's accusation seemed to have hurt her greatly.

The Flügel
The Heavenly Winged girl hung her shoulders in disappointment.

"What I spoke in just now was the self-created language that Avant Heim used, I'd never expect it to be known that soon."

But she quickly changed her sulking face.

"Seyanaa~[8], so why are you here?"

".....Oi, wasn't that your original way of speaking before? Why are you changing to a Kyoto dialect?"

"I've never heard of Kyoto, but this is the archaic lingua franca used by humans...you don't like it?"

"Yes, that way of talking will really piss someone off, and we won't be able to talk anymore."

"Guuu, I rarely have guests here, so it's a great opportunity for me to show off my knowledge. I'm really sorry."

The Flügel's
The Heavenly Winged eyes started to tear up and she now carried a dejected look, contradicting the majesty that they had exuded before the Oaths.

"In any case, please use a normal tone for speaking, okay?"

"Oshikayee."

"Goodbye."

The Flügel
Sora turned his back and prepared to leave, but The Heavenly Winged immediately grabbed onto his jeans and pleaded tearfully:

"Ahhhh! Sorry! I'm so sorry! I don't get many visitors, so I thought I would have some fun. I'll serve you tea and snacks, so please don't go away!"

Part 3

In a fantasy-like setting where light and bookshelves intertwined, a corner in the grandiose library.

There was tea and other refreshments. Sora, Shiro and The Heavenly Winged (The Flügel) girl sat around the table for tea.

Steph was still unconscious, so they had no choice but to let her sleep in a nearby place.

As if wanting to reintroduce herself, The Heavenly Winged (The Flügel) lightly coughed.

"——That, I don't need to mention that I'm The Heavenly Winged (The Flügel) that is able to speak in sixteen languages and is also proficient in seven hundred kinds of archaic language, so what can I do for the King of Imanity."

".....Ah, okay, that."

Deciding to give up on beating around the bush, Sora immediately answered the purpose of his trip.

"I'll be direct, I want you to hand over this library to me."

.....

——A moment of silence.

After hearing what Sora said, the girl picked up her teacup.

"So you want to challenge me as the representative of human race?"

"Yes, that is correct."

Then, with her goddess-like eyes.

"Is that so.....but this library is filled with all the books that I had collected, for us The Heavenly Winged (The Flügel) that strongly values knowledge, the books that are stored here can be said to be equal to our life——"

She then squinted her eyes.

"Since I used my life as a bet, what do you have that can be used for this game?"

Taking a sip of tea, she stared at Sora with sharp eyes, momentarily emitting out [Killing Intent],

Steph who was supposed to have fallen unconscious, uttered out an "Eek~" .

—But after thinking about the [Ten Oaths], and the fact that he had experienced the same thing once before.....

Sora was completely immune to her [Killing Intent].

"40000 volumes of———[The other world's books]."

"*Puiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii*~~~~~~~~~~~~!?"

The girl sprayed the tea from her mouth, her killing intent completely dissipating.

"How ru, rude.....so, sorry for the reaction."

"......Dirty....."

Her face showered with tea, Shiro protested, while Sora gave a thumbs up.

"It's okay, this is a good sign."

Sora answered with a bright smile.

"Hav, having said that, four, fourty thousand.....you sure love to joke, where, where do you keep that many books—"

The Flügel
The Heavenly Winged girl was barely able to keep herself from fainting.

Taking out the tablet, Sora replied:

"There exist electronic information in this——is that more understandable? This is filled with forty thousand volumes of an [Other world's book]."

"——What....!?"

The girl widened her eyes and stared at the tablet on Sora's hand, as if looking for a hole in it.

"I stored the books inside for learning, there are encyclopedias, medical books, philosophy books, science and mathematics——we have the majority of the knowledge that our previous world had collected."

Listening to what Sora had described, the girl gazed at him with suspicion and said:

"....You are saying, that you are from another world."

"Yes."

"You are——lying."

"Eh? Strange?"

Why? Steph believed it as soon as they told her—

"Indeed, the elves specialises in summoning magic, and although a small amount, I do have a collection of "Outsider"'s books. Nevertheless, to summon a [Living] one, a large amount of force is required in order for them to remain in this world. Even with the power of the gods, summoning people from another world is difficult."

——Hearing till here.

Sora turned towards Steph who was lying on the ground:

"......Steph, you can stop pretending, can you please answer my question."

"Gu, guuuuu.....spot, spotted already.....?"

"It's different from what you said, wasn't it common for people from other worlds to appear?"

"I, I'm not that knowledgeable with that kind of magic.....eh? It's impossible to summon someone from a different world?"

.....In the future, refrain from taking Steph's words into consideration.

After Sora had noted it down, he started thinking about how to make the other party believe him when ——

"——But, if that is really the case, it does really explain how the human species could beat an elf in a game."

Before Sora even started, the girl had already given him a chance to prove himself.

"Can I see some kind of evidence?"

"Evidence huh.....anyways, you should see this."

Under the girl's watchful eyes, Sora operated the tablet and called out the application for books.

He then proceeded to open a book.

".....Oh wow, this is a language I have yet to see.....and it doesn't appear to be randomly concocted out."

As expected of The Heavenly Winged (The Flügel) who were well versed in seven hundred kinds of language.

Just by glancing, she spotted that there was a clear regularity in the text.

"—Although I've seen a similar language, but.....there is a language that I don't know, a world that is unknown.....encyclopedia.....specialised books.....knowledge, all in this thin box, forty for.....forty thousand——hehhehehehehehe."

"Whoa! Saliva! Your saliva!"

The girl that was engrossed with the screen suddenly realised that saliva was dripping out of her mouth, before quickly wiping it away.

"How ru, rude.....I am too careless."

"Then, with this as the bet, what do you think?"

Pondering for a while, the girl immediately said.

"—Yes, if what you said was really true."

"I thought so too, this much is not enough right."

This could also be a pseudo-book written based on an artificial language.

In order to prove that the knowledge in the tablet was completely true, the only way is to——

"Can the both of you prove that you are residents from a different world?"

——There was only this.

"Honestly I also have no idea, I am a virgin! My sister as you can see is a child! I can't even grasp the slightest differences between the humans here and us, so I don't know, how we are different from Imanity!"

.....He spoke confidently, albeit cluelessly.

"You should have more knowledge than I do right? Unless you are unable to tell us and the humans here apart too?"

After listening to Sora, she carefully observed Shiro and Sora, before comparing them with Steph.

"——Sora-sama's skin, and Elchea's people have a slight difference, but Shiro-sama is a bit too white.....I want to confirm it, but could you let me touch your body?"

"——Well.....that depends on the location."

Sora said, on alert.

"I want to touch your erogenous zone."

"Then I shall give you my permission, also, please don't stop even when you are satisfied!"

Sora replied without a moment of hesitation, but there was someone who was unwilling.

".....Nii, 18 years....."

"Wu, wuuu.....that's right.....but this proposal is really too attractive....."

However, with a demeanor akin to a physical body examiner, The Heavenly Winged Flügel flatly said:

"Every living thing in this world contains traces of Elemental, without exception, ——okay, to be much more direct, if I can confirm where the nerve cells centralise in, I can detect what kind of Elemental you have."

".....(Stares~)"

".....(Stares~)...."

Shiro and Steph used cold eyes to glare at Sora.

"Guu.....I shall strip off that prohibition! Also—"

Sora started proposing out another condition.

"Since I allowed you to feel it, you must let me feel your erogenous zone!"

"Okay, I'll be in your care."

"Hm? I can!?"

———…….....

(Stroking, stroking...)

"I say....."

"Yes? Is the feeling not to your liking?"

"No, un, it feels comfortable. Right, so comfortable it's almost shocking."

Actually, this was a different feeling than rubbing Steph's chest.

There was an incredible feeling, that someone wouldn't let go.

Although the case.....

"But, this feeling of betrayal——I just cannot agree...."

Sora while stroking on The Heavenly Flügel Winged girl's—[Feather] said.

On the other hand, what the girl touched was Sora's [Nipple].

"Ohya, isn't this the erogenous zone?"

"I can say that as a man, if they admit that that was the erogenous zone, they will have to question their gender. In addition, what I wanted you to touch is located somewhere else."

(Stroke Stroke)

".....Un, please don't do it that accurately, I might make strange sounds."

".....Wuuun."

——After seeing her like that.

Sora gave a glance to Shiro.

"My little sister, I'm only feeling the feathers, how is that?"

".....Un, very healthy...."

This must be the so-called great minds think alike.

Even before Sora had begun opening his mouth, Shiro had already prepared her smartphone to videotape.

"Since it's so rare to have this opportunity, I'll enlighten you, but I've already read up on everything related to H-game technology."

Sora said as his fingers positioned themselves to the root of her feathers, before sliding upwards against her feather.

In the midst of the journey, the feathers started beating about.

With that point as the center, Sora moved his hands and unleashed his full powers.

"Hiya! Ah——erm..... sorry.....that, I can't.....concentrate.....please.....ahhh.....have mercy....."

"Ah.....un, this is not bad."

".....Nii, angle.....I want.....her reaction....."

"Ah, roger, director. Here."

"Ahhhh—!"

".....The Heavenly Winged (The Flügel).....what are the siblings doing....."

Steph couldn't help but say: "Meeting these two, even God's weapons can become the object of sexual harassment?" Steph also started to generate more respect for the two.

Just like that, this process continued until The Heavenly Winged (The Flügel) was too exhausted.....

Part 4

"Uhmmm, then firstly—"

After tidying up her clothes, the girl sat back on the chair and covered up her originally flustered face.

"Please forgive my rudeness, I have viewed the two of you as an inferior human race, therefore I did not introduce myself. My name is Jibril.....pleased to meet you."

Proclaiming herself to be Jibril, The Heavenly(The Flügel) Winged girl bowed her head apologetically.

".....Steph."

"Ah, yesh, what is it?"

"......In this world, how low are humans in the social hierarchy?"

"I'll be unreserved——we are the lowest."

Then The Heavenly(The Flügel) Winged girl——Jibril let out a sweet smile while correcting Steph.

"Why don't you say that you are just beings that are acknowledged as 『Monkeys with the ability to speak』?"

Without a hint of malice, Jibril nonchalantly continued.

"Ah, furthermore I am not interested in normal humans, because I've already made a thorough investigation, not to mention I'm already bored of looking at the documents, so.....gu, that person.....Staph-san is it?"

"It is Steph! Ah, wait, I'm Stephanie Dora!"

"Whatever, I'll just call you Dora-chan."

"What!?"

"I'm not interested in Dora-chan, so could you please find a spot and idle around"

Jibril without a change of expression delivered such words.

"......Can I cry now?"

Steph (nopan) who was ordered to be a dog, started tearing at her lacrimal gland

"......About that, I can't really protest...."

However, in objection to Jibril's apology, Sora raised out another issue.

"So to say, we are not from the human race?"

"No, how do I describe.....basically, I can't detect any 『sort』 of Elemental in both of your bodies."

Using her fingertips to light up a small candle, she let Sora see what exactly was [Elemental].

"Even if you have it, I probably don't have the means to detect it.....in other words, both of you are not defined as an 『Organism』 in this world——but your composition should be that of human."

Which means.....

What could it possibly mean?

".....Otherwise.....?"

Self-questioning.

A speck of light could be seen in Jibril's eyes, before she excitedly cried out.

"You are an 『Unknown』!!"

"Ahhh, there isn't anything more exhilarating than 『Unknowns』!"

She clasped her hands together and faced the sky as if praying.

"Unknown——an unknown in the making! He who does not exist in this world, and furthermore an original, able to produce knowledge of things not of this world! Yet I dare to compare them with the inferior human race, I sincerely apologise to the two of you!"

——To be classified as a species not of human, Sora had a complicated feeling.

"——Well, whatever, so this proves that we are not from this world right?"

"Oh, yes, then——regarding your challenge to me."

"Un."

"Of course I'll accept, and my bet is—"

Jibril stopped for a moment.

"——Hm? What was it again?"

".....Didn't you hear what I said?"

"Sor, sorry.....It looks like I was so shocked that I forgot what we discussed earlier."

Sora started getting impatient and coldly stared at her, in which Jibril hurriedly replied:

"So, sorry! The bet will be—— 『My everything』!?"

"What?"

From handing out her library to jumping three stages higher, Steph couldn't help but shout out.

Even Sora was thinking in his mind [.....What? Is it real?]

But thinking about the huge profit he would reap, Sora decided to silently observe the situation.

"Do, don't look at me like that, I am one of the 8 representative members for 『Avant Helm』 okay? If I could, I would want to bet my whole country, but is this condition okay?"

.....Well.....it was quite unexpected.

Sora originally wanted to only request the items inside the library, and maybe even keep Jibril for himself, but——

"Is, is it not enough? To be honest, this doesn't equate up to 40000 books right. Can I request for you to wait for a while? I'll go back to Avant Heim and take control of the council members, before coming back with everything The Heavenly Winged has! So please don't hand the books to anyone else—"

The Flügel

"How long will that take!?"

"Erm...that.....I, I can promise it'll be completed within a hundred years!"

"WON'T WE BE DEAD ALREADY!"

"Kuuuu.....humans sure are weak....."

However this is.....more than what he wanted—

"——I'm happy it is worth that much, but looks like I'll have to change it...."

Sora whispered to himself, at this time, his eyes were clearly showing that he was fighting back the greedy demon.

"——No, it isn't necessary to go to that extent, all I want is 『The right to own Jibril』."

"Eh.....wi, will that really do!?"

Jibril's eyes were glowing with an excited and joyous light.

"Of course I'll accept! Ah, if I win, can I add another condition?"

"Hm?"

"It will be fine if occasionally but, could you come here and have tea? I want to understand more about you two, that——whole body, I want to understand every inch of your bodies.. heh.... hehehheh....."

In an instant, Jibril's expression changed from a sweet smile to an old man's face.

To be honest, Sora really wanted to take a picture with his phone.

"—You talk as if you are going to win."

"Yes, although unintentionally, but I am going to achieve victory."

It appears that, because she was certain she was going to win, it matters not what she was going to bet.

With a devilish smile, Sora replied.

"Really? Then if I win, can I add another condition, if possible?"

"O? Okay, since it is impossible for you to win, so please do."

——Okay.

A gap bigger than one needed has just opened.

Yes, to conquer this world——the gap has opened.

Sora let lose a superficial smile, but only Shiro noticed.

Part 4

The company proceeded to move to the playing area——the center of the library.

They walked through the fantasy-like library that was like a maze.

En route, Sora asked a question which he had been puzzled with.

"Jibril, why did you take this library in the first place? Didn't this library only have knowledge about the human race at that time?"

"Ah, yes, my home Avant Heim is on the back of Phantasma——"

Sora thought about the float——correction, the sky city.

"Well for The Heavenly Winged (The Flügel), we don't need food and are semi-immortal, so getting territories is a trivial thing, but after collecting knowledge for thousands of years, we started to get troubled by the amount of books."

"……oh."

"At that time, the 18 council members decided something, the act of 『Removing all books』"

——Jibril did mention something about the 『18 Flügel council members』 before.

He remembered that it composed of eight representatives, and also includes someone with special powers, The Heavenly Winged (The Flügel)'s [Democratic government].

"That was the so-called knowledge sharing——not really sharing but, it was a crazy act proposed by the members of the council to return the books back to the land."

Clenching her fist, Jibril started the criticism.

"Of course I opposed! Including me, three others also violently opposed, but the result was 4:4, and the one with the special powers established it, and so this hateful law was passed through."

She hung her shoulders, unsatisfied.

"But since I couldn't agree with it, I wanted to have my own stack room, thus I left the sky city alone."

"—Imanity's knowledge and wisdom hub, was taken away due to this reason eh….."

Sora murmured, Jibril on the other hand violently protested out.

"Because those were my books! I cared for them, controlled the temperature, humidity and even help collate those books into bookshelves, and the books must be sent back due to a law!? Ahhhhhh, how could I let that happen, I'll never agree to that kind of thing! If not for that prohibition of force by the God, I would have decapitated the opposi——oh, okay, we're here."

"How hateful, this girl is scary."

"—I have to remind you, Sora."

Hearing Sora spat out those words, Steph told him:

"The Heavenly (The Flügel) Winged may collect information about life now, but in the past——"

However, Jibril interrupted her and said it herself.

"Yes, before the 『Ten Oaths』 ——what we collected were 『Heads』."

As if reminiscing about her happy memories from the past, she revealed a hearty smile.

"I used to be so young and fit——everyone used to argue about where should the heads of Gigants and dragons be placed at. Oh, don't worry, we had too many human heads to keep count of."

Sora, who subconsciously covered his own neck, said:

"——It's too misleading to put your names as The Heavenly ones, I recommend you get rid of it."

They weren't angels, but devils.

——Center of the library.

Bookshelves encased the area to give it a huge circular space.

There were complex geometric patterns painted on a round table in the center, and a pair of chairs that faced each other from the ends of the table.

"You should know how to play this game, it's 『Word connector』 .....except——we are using this."

Jibril gently lifted her hand up, and the table started floating.

The patterns on the table started glowing, and then started to shrink.

Afterwards a countless number of magic squares emerged, and in between the two chairs that faced each other, a crystal floated.

"......This is?"

"We are playing 『Materializing word connector』."

"Please sit."

Sora sat on the chair under her urging, facing head to head with Jibril.

"The Heavenly Winged (The Flügel) are a [Fighting race]——so we aren't good with the usual games, incidentally, we aren't interested in those kind of games either."

"——even with the 『Ten Oaths』, you feel the same?"

"Yeah, playing those kinds of tedious games, we would always think that [Cutting off this guy's head would be faster, arghh what a pain].....it is a troublesome oath, I swear one day I am going to give that sly devil——oh, I just said something horrible didn't I, I'm sorry?"

"""How hateful, this [Race] is scary."""

Seeing Jibril put on such a cute smile, the cheeks of three people started twitching.

"But sometimes The Heavenly Winged (The Flügel) ourselves will have disputes, so that is when we utilise this game."

Jibril touched the floating crystal in the air.

"The rules are simple, both sides must connect the end of a word to form another word."

It really is just word connector, but—

" [Using a word that has already been said], [Unable to answer within 30 seconds], [Unable to continue], as long as you fulfill one of the above, you [Lose]."

Jibril said while having a sweet smile.

"[The most knowledgeable one wins]—this is the method that we who gathers intelligence use to solve problems."

".....Well, any form of words in any language is okay?"

"Yes, but mouthing out an entity, a fictional animal, or unimaginable things that cannot be specified, will result in an [Invalid answer], this must be noted though."

But for the explanation regarding the condition to fail, Sora had some doubts.

"—What does [Unable to continue] means?"

"Because this is materializing word connector....."

Jibril gave a slight smile.

"The word that you mutter out, [Will appear if it isn't present] and [Will disappear if it is present] ——under this rules, we'll conduct this word connector.....so now do you get the idea?"

.....In other words.

If you mouth out gorilla, a gorilla would appear.

Although it was anticipated, it sounded like an interesting game.

"Okay, then what happens if I say [Girl]?"

Jibril gave an expression as if Sora asked a great question. She then answered:

"Apart from me——your sister and Dora-chan will disappear."

"Not all the girls in this world?"

"Don't be worried, this game doesn't hold that much power."

Jibril bitterly smiled.

"Although the words either materialize or disappear, it merely moves them into an alternate space only."

.....Although temporarily, it still adds an intensity to the people not in the game.

Jibril continued:

"Technically, it is impossible for any direct interference that causes the other party to be unable to continue the game."

"So no direct interference would happen to the players ?"

"Yes."

"Then Shiro, come over here."

Shiro started jogging and with a 'bam', planted herself——on Sora's lap.

"Both of us normally play the game together, so if [Girl] was spoken, the only one who would disappear is Steph right?"

"Eh?"

Steph had a shocked expression on her face.

"In addition, what if it wasn't directly interfering? For example, [Heart] or [Water] which makes up our body."

Seeing Sora trying to grasp the rules carefully and with prudence, Jibril felt admiration and smiled, before replying back:

"If that happens, then whatever that constitutes the player will be retained, but otherwise would disappear. For example, if water was spoken, water aside from your bodies would disappear, so does the heart ; as a Flügel myself, my body is generally [Elemental gallery]. so if [Elemental gallery] was to disappear, my body would not be affected in any way."

Wuuuu.....so that's the case.

"Also, once the game ends everything will be restored, so please don't hold back, and [Release out your knowledge]."

——With a sweet smile gracing her face, Jibril asked:

"Of course, in the circumstances where you weak humans won't die, can you satisfy me?"

".....Eh!?"

Having finally understood her predicament, Steph cried out.

"Waitttt! Eh!? Diee!?"

"The game does not affect reality, as long as it ends you may revive?"

"No, wait a moment!?"

(You said die?)

(Just wait a moment!)

"Think rationally, I don't have to be here right!? And only I would be in danger——"

Disregarding the existence of Steph, Jibril rested her hand on the floating crystal.

"Okay then—?"

Sora and Shiro followed Jibril and placed their hands on the other side of the crystal, before responding back.

"Okay——Let's start."

"........Give your all....."

"Listen to meeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!"

".....Steph, sit....."

Under the power of the Oaths, Steph behaved just like a faithful dog and sat.

"AH~~~~~~~~can't escape now! I don't want tooooooo~~~~~~~~!"

The magic started expanding and covered the entire circular space.

——This signified that they had moved towards another space away from reality.

Meaning that the game has begun.

Part 5

"Okay, I'll give you the privilege to start first, so please choose your favorite word then?"

"Wuuu, let me think.....then we'll....."

While playing with his phone, Sora placed his hand on the crystal and said:

"Start with.....[Hydrogen bomb(suibaku)]"

Instantaneously, an iron block weighing [27 tons] materialized above their heads.

The object that Sora said, was incomprehensible to both Steph and Jibril.

Moreover, even if they knew, they wouldn't understand it. Sora proceeded to explain out the word that he said.

After all, it was a weapon created by the humans in Sora's world——the biggest and worst mistake.

Because it was indeed a——weapon of mass destruction.

Jibril stared at that object with a blank expression.

The bomb started to fuse and fission fuel compresses, initiating fission ——detonation.

After heat was generated by the nuclear detonation, neutrons from the fission of the rod combine with lithium-deuterate, producing out a strong light.

——Jibril was clueless as to what that was.

However, she was created by gods to kill God, so her Flügel instincts told her.

——[The approaching light will be capable of annihilating everything].

"____!"

What happened afterwards was a secondary explosion, and she immediately came to a conclusion after less than one hundred milliseconds.

Jibril placed her hand on the crystal and spoke her next words.

"——[Number 4 distant protection(Kurianse)]!"

Her words as well as the end process of the fusion came at the same time.

——The swelling of heat ball.

In the confined space of the library, [A second sun] was born.

The ultra-high temperature instantly vaporized everything, resulting in a lethal heat shockwave.

Literally, the building [Disappeared]——

An overwhelming violence capable of scorching everything in a kilometer radius, as if a tornado swept through a town.

.....A mushroom-shaped cloud reached the stratosphere, leaving the library in [Ruins].

A pothole was created in the world they were in.

——An unharmed Jibril stood there.

"——Satisfied? You can't kill me."

Jibril stared ahead of her.

Sora was boldly smiling, Shiro was still as expressionless as before, while Steph was so stunned her mouth hung open.

The three were equally unharmed.

"Trying to blow up on the first try? If not for my [Goodwill], this game would have already been over."

——Correct.

The magic that Jibril shouted out, wasn't intended to protect herself only.

[Number 4 distant protection]——is an elven magic of the highest class.

It was a magic that could expand, protecting Sora and company.

Jibril herself.....was directly hit by the explosion, but she was unharmed.

"Goodwill? Hey, don't say such nice things."

Sora replied back nonchalantly.

"Even if you obtained our knowledge——and just let this game end, this kind of boring stuff, you simply can't agree with it right. I just wanted to bet on your [Judgemental skills]."

Which means——consternation while facing against an [Unknown entity], and ending the game without harvesting any knowledge?

Or protect the two, letting the game continue.

Sora saw through the decision made within the one hundred milliseconds. Jibril smiled at this thought.

"Although it is within expectations, but it seems that I won't be able to let you fulfill the condition of being [Unable to continue]."

Gazing into the scenery of the scorched surroundings.

And looking at the unscathed Jibril who got hit by a great force, Sora sighed.

"It's great if you can understand this."

"Looks like we have to find another way to win, since word connector is easy, there will be lots of methods."

".....Fufu, what an interesting human....."

As if the game had a reset button, Jibril said:

"Then——please don't make me feel bored okay?"

——The implication of this sentence, even Steph herself understood it clearly.

Even with such a powerful destructive force, they can't force Jibril to be [Unable to continue the game].

On the contrary, as long as Jibril is determined, she was ready to force the siblings to be [Unable to continue].

And it could be easily done, because the fact stands that they are fragile.

This was the [position difference].

The gap between the races, was a wall that was higher than the skies.

Reaffirming this fact, Steph couldn't help but sigh.

——Sora could've intended to end this in one blow.

Using the knowledge of a different world, was probably the strongest known attack, mutual destruction to end this game. Now that the trick was useless——

"Rest assured, we won't make you feel bored——[Elemental gallery(seireikairou)]"

Ignoring the cloud in Steph's head, Sora readily placed his hands on the crystal and said.

Although humans can't detect it, it is the source that all races that use magic need, and thus was eliminated.

For Sora to use this move, Jibril was surprised once again.

"This is——shocking."

"Because this is a newly learnt word, and who could guarantee that The Heavenly Flügel Winged won't use any mind reading magic."

Sora replied with a happy smile, the worried look Steph thought he would have didn't appear.

As if to confirm it, to use a plan that had no visible results, and when known, immediately switch to the next trick.

Sora was carrying an unperturbed expression.

"Or it is just convenient?"

Facing against Sora's happy smile, Jibril replied:

"No.....the elemental won't be supplementary, there will be limits to the body, like being incapable of flight. But these words are unnecessary in word connector.....so it doesn't matter."

However, Jibril was rendered a bit restless.

"To be exact..... I'm getting a restless feeling."

"Ahh.....like the feeling when your phone doesn't have reception right."

Hearing this line, Jibril wildly looked up as if she heard bells.

"What is a phone!? Is it related to the box just now!? What is reception!?"

"When you beat me, I'll tell you——FACE! Your face is too close! And wipe off that saliva!"

"Ah! Ho, how rude.....hehehehe.....forty thousand books from another world....hehheh——"

Jibril had a slack expression, as if she were a girl imagining about delicious cakes.

".....Nii, this person."

"Yeah, she exceeded the boundaries of being strange, but she is quite interesting——oh, Jibril, hurry, your next one."

"Ah! Rig, right, then I'll choose a trivial one——[Horse(Uma)]."

In a moment, a horse appeared in the room.

"Eh!?"

'Pururururu'.....the horse was smacking its lips together. Steph couldn't help but take a step back.

Without any hesitation, Sora followed up:

"Okay, [Pussy (maxxko)]."

""——.....?""

Jibril and Steph.

Both of them had question marks above their heads.

Then, Steph suddenly held onto her clothes and exclaimed out with a flustered face:

"——Yo,You you, what are you thinking!?"

Sora laughed and replied:

"Well, to play word connector, [Obscene language] is a must, so calm down a bit."

".....Hu."

Shiro had the same deadpan look, while Jibril was——

"The foul language of Human.....No, from Dora-chan's clueless expression, this must be from the [Other world], slang of the female genital——! Ahh, knowledge starting to fill up.....!"

Happily cried out to the skies.

".....This person is also weird, un."

Sora placed his hand on Shiro's waist.

——How?

Shiro was acutely aware of Sora's intention.

She nodded slowly and replied——[Disappeared].

——As long as [No direct interference to force player to be unable to continue], it is possible to interfere with the players.

"Now things will start to be interesting."

——Steph saw the secret smile that Sora revealed.

Part 6

————……

10 minutes had past since the start of the game.

Still continuing with the game, Jibril answered:

"I'm bored of this dusty place already——let's play a little, [Beach(Bi-chi)]."

The scenery instantly transformed from destroyed potholes to a sunny beach.

There were rocks of complex shapes and beautiful white sand, capable of putting famous tourist spots in Sora's original world to shame.

And the blue sea which had a glass-like clarity, dazzled the beach even further.

This must be the ideal [Beach] in Jibril's mind, a scene she thought out.

But—

Sora shaded Shiro from the sun with his hands.

"Ahhhh~! This is indeed a marvelous place, but for Otakus, this sun is unbearable! [Nipple(chikubi)]."

"But you can hide in the shade over there oh, and to calmly use this trick.....You seem to be intent on doing some fun things, so let me have a go too? [Bikini(bikini)]"

Then——materializing with the words, the women were to put on full bikini——

——There was change.....but.....

Sora abruptly shouted out:

"Jibril, you don't understand it at all! To change into bikini, you've to remove the clothing first! It's difficult to find words that would leave the bikini alone, you don't get it at all!"

Indeed, everyone was wearing bikini.

——However, underneath their clothes.

"Th, that's how it is.....sorry, I didn't realize your intentions——!"

"Yo, you all! Can't you stop fooling around and play this game seriously!?"

Jibril seemed to really admire Sora's remarks and seriously apologised to him. Steph who couldn't resist it cried out.

However, as if Sora completely ignored the protests of Steph, he continued the game.

"Nevermind.....then——[Luggage(nimotsu)]."

——For fear of accidentally erasing Steph, Sora carefully thought of other implications in the word before saying it out. [9]

Only seeing a heavy backpack landing beside him with a loud thud.

"Then.....oh yeah, how about [Whirlwind(tsumuji)]?"

"Yes! Jibril! You passed this time!"

At the same time where Jibril finished her word.

A 'Pa' sound resonated, with god-like speed, the siblings removed their phones and aimed it at the target.

——A blowing whirlwind started to materialize.

——Lifting up Steph's skirt.

"Oei, whu, what are you!"

——Sora and Shiro together with their continuous shooting mode, started their high-speed photography of Steph.

"Jibril, it's perfect this time! Because if there weren't any bikini, there will be a Mature 18 restriction for Steph! Since there is a bikini, it ain't provocative to look underneath the skirt!"

"Thanks for the praise."

Jibril happily answered with a smile.

Steph pressed down on her skirt while whining out. Ignoring her reaction, Shiro continued:

"Then——"

A smirk came.

"This will complete it——[Women's clothing(joseifuku)]."

Instantly——his words materialized.

The things that are present will disappear, which means——

Including the bikini, all the women's clothing will disappear——

Needless to say, Steph, Jibril and even Shiro——

For a moment, Steph didn't know what was happening, but after a long while, the voice of her scream resounded around.

"K————Kyahhhhhhhh!"

Her face flushed, Steph tried to cover her whole body.

——You think this would be Mature 18 restricted right?

But there isn't any problems, because——!

"Ha~~HAHA! How is this? Little sister. The three dimensional world! And since shoes and socks aren't [Women's clothing].——This means full naked!"

Sora opened his hands widely and looked up at the sky. With a posture of a demon king, he majestically announced:

"This is both clear and obvious! This is perfectly healthy! Moderate porn! But not dirty! We'll call this.....yah——tentatively name it as [Super safe room]!"

".....Nii, nice job."

The siblings gave thumbs up, while Steph who was being photographed yelled out.

"You——what are you doing!"

"Didn't you say we should have some fun? Eh? Isn't this fun?"

"THIS ISN'T FUNNY IN ANY WAYYYYYYY!"

Steph cried out, it was stupid for her to think that Sora was formulating a plan to defeat Jibril.

Steph's reactions were within Sora's expectations, but Jibril——

".....An in, inquiry."

"Hm?"

"From my observations——the world both of you are in gauge that being naked is [Unsoundly]?"

"Un, a great deduction."

"Bu, but for breeding in races, it should be the same as the other world right?"

"".....You didn't limit it to [Humanity], so it's the same for The Heavenly Winged (The Flügel) right?"

Sora casually attempted sexual harassment to Jibril.

But Jibril was so mesmerized that she didn't pay note to that.

"Bu, but if the desires of breeding were [Unsound], then children will be considered as unsound too, won't this conflict with the breeding process? Ah, [Clover(Kuroba)]."

Her breathing was getting disorganized, as Jibril (nude) continued to bombard Sora with questions.

She almost forgot about the [30 seconds rule], so she continued.

For Jibril's claims, Sora could only applaud.

"Impressive, but in our world, your kind of rhetorical question would only place you as a [Pervert]."

"Ensuring the survival of a race is considered as pervertic!?"

It was akin to being struck by a bolt from the blue. Jibril started clasping her hand and exposed an 'outer world' expression.

"Ahhhh——interesting, I really want to see, I really want to see the unreasonable world!"

".....I can't agree to that point."

Sora felt powerless against her reaction.

"Her reaction sure is boring....."

Sora originally wanted Jibril to distort her elated expression into a shy one because of the embarrassment.....

As expected——It isn't good if there wasn't any shame.

Not to mention that Jibril had a body like a masterpiece, a painting that is hard to replicate——

".....Nii, Steph is more.....interesting....."

"Yes, I'll record, Shiro can do the photography."

".....Understood....."

"Hey, what are you doing!"

"No problem, continue upholding your spirit of shame, but don't forget about your sense of shame too oh."

"I don't understand it at all!!!!"

Part 7

……————

A few hours later.

The space has already turned into something——indescribable.

In a jungle-like forest, there were Moais and Pyramids side by side.

And in the center was Sora who was naked, wearing a cowboy hat and eating curry.

Sitting on his lap was a naked Shiro, who wore cat ears and a scarf while indulging in a bamboo shoot-shaped cake.

There was also Jibril who whenever got dressed, got forcefully removed by Sora, thus she was also naked.

As for Steph——

"Babble argh#%$┻≠?▿@+§ & ~ #→Ψ∞??!"

She was being chased around by an army of Cthulhu, her SAN points almost reaching 0 [10]

While eating curry, Sora said:

"Nom nom.....Jibril, aren't you hungry? [Mantle(mantoru)]."

"Don't mind me, The Heavenly (The Flügel) Winged are different from the powerless human, we don't eat [luiga (ruia-ga)]."

"Ahhhh. really.....but it should be soon right? The sun is about to set, please give up okay?"

"——Fufu.....rest assured, The Heavenly (The Flügel) Winged don't need to rest—"

"I still have an unlimited number of vocabulary, and I want to dig out all the knowledge both of you have, whether if it take days or months, so please cooperate with me okay?"

——Jibril replied in a cheerful manner.

Steph could only hear despair for such chilling words, but————Jibril remarked it in such a cheerful tone.

Sora replied, without a care for her words:

"Ah, but I want to enjoy the morning in my room, so no thanks, ha.....[Outer core(gaikaku)]."

"Really? If you are tired, I don't mind if you deliberately lose! [Clock(kuro-ko)]."

Jibril continued:

"Anyways, it brings me joy when I see humans struggle."

Jibril said with a smile, but Sora put on a long face.

".....You kept repeating weak and vulnerable, I feel pissed off——[Creature(kuri-cha)]."

——Just this word.

The Cthulhu-shaped army that was chasing after Steph disappeared.

"——Fu! Fu——Fu——!!.....Sa, saved....."

"I, I thought I was going to die". Steph mumbled out while collapsed on the floor.

On the other side, Sora said:

"Indeed, in the eyes of the Sixth position, we humans are probably ants right? However, you seem to be underestimating us ants aren't you?"

"I'm sorry, I didn't think that the human species are that——self-conceited.....[Lights(akari)]."

Jibril replied, albeit surprised.

Sora then provoked out a smile, a slightly implicit look of anger.

"If you think that strength and longevity is equal to power, then you are just a——[Simpleton]."

——Hearing this word.

A response came from Jibril.

"You say I——am weaker than humans?"

——Jibril did not hold respect for Sora and the rest.

But the same feeling as being drawn in by her interest in books, mainly curiosity.

Being told off that she couldn't match up with [Books], was simply unacceptable.

As if mocking her, Sora continued:

"So-called [Weak], does not refer to the presence or absence of power, but the inability to accomplish anything——for example, someone who was only built for fighting, yet is barred from violence."

"——.....It seems that you are unaware of the position that you are in."

Jibril said, her eyes implying something different——killing intent.

Yes——if she wanted, Jibril could force Sora to be [Unable to continue] at any time.

The reason why she didn't do it, was because she was [Playing], relaxing for a [Whim] only.

Her gaze implied this: 'Have you forgotten about your position?'

But bearing the full brunt of her gaze, Sora replied:

"Then we'll educate you——about how weak you are! Prepare."

With his hand resting on the crystal——

"Shiro, ready?"

".....Un....."

Acknowledging her nod, Sora turned to face Steph.

"Steph~ have you caught your breath?"

"Eh? Yeah.....an,anyways.....than, thank you for the help....."

"It's been tough on you, if not for Steph who is diverting away the dangerous guys, we might not have won."

Listening in on Sora's declaration of victory, Jibril frowned.

Facing against Steph's astonished face, Sora revealed his best smile yet.

"——So Steph?"

"Ye, yes?"

"You might die for a while——so be patient okay? [Sit]."

"————————What?"

Steph was forced to sit on the ground.

Yet she couldn't comprehend the meaning behind that sentence.

Sora and Shiro——jumping up forcefully, shouted out:

"[——Lithosphere(risosufea)]."

——In an instance, everything on the ground disappeared.

——[Mantle] and [Outer core].

Because Jibril didn't know what those words mean, the planet was gradually being hollowed out.

With [Lithosphere] being the uppermost surface——

The entire surface was eliminated, and everyone started falling to the core.

However, Jibril was still able to calmly analyze the situation.

".....I see, using [Elemental gallery] to drag away my wings, was for this purpose?"

——Although she couldn't comprehend the meaning behind those words.

But Jibril realized, that Sora's goal——was to let himself fall towards the core of the planet.

Although she had never witness the [Core of the planet]——

She glanced at the bottom.

(.....Center about six thousand degrees.....surface about three thousand degrees——that's probably it.)

The pressure from the center would force a [Unable to continue the game] condition, but before that ——Sora and the rest would all die.

Towards this flawed plan, Jibril couldn't help but smile.

Yes——because this means.....

"——You are trying to [Kill me]?"

Jibril concealed her disappointment and started laughing out.

It was only a matter of time before the heat forced the two to be [Unable to continue], but—

She thought: 'With such little time remaining, at least let me enjoy it.'

"I won't allow morning to arrive then——[Morning(asa)]."

As Jibril uttered out this sentence——the sun disappeared.

But——While Sora and Shiro are falling, they each took a deep breath.

Then Sora placed his hand on the crystal and with the minimum amount of breath, mumbled out.

".....[Oxygen(sanso)]."

Everyone started to feel a strong headache and was unable to breathe.

Of course, Jibril felt it too.....however——

(——Shutting off the breathing supply.....a pointless struggle.)

Indeed——Jibril was The Heavenly Winged. The Flügel

Her place of residence was originally the [Sky City], twenty thousand meters above the ground.

Yes, she didn't need to [Breathe], but for her body which was [Formed by the Elementals] to have hypoxia, it wasn't a major problem.

However——for humans like Sora and Shiro, it could be fatal.

They will suffocate soon, fulfilling the [Unable to continue] rule.

"——You know it must be pointless right? Let me be happy for a while okay——[You(sonata)]."

She understood that, death by suffocation was impossible for her.

For now, Jibril requested another [Word] from him.

Perhaps understanding her intentions——

".....Damn.....[Sow(taneue)]."

With their attempts failing, Sora remorsely responded to her request.

(Unexpectedly honest, although I would like to restore a good foothold to continue the game....)

Jibril laughed, and spoke the word——

——"Then we'll come with a [Air(ea)]."

Hearing this word, Sora discarded his façade and formed a crooked smile.

As expected, Jibril don't know.....what was air's——[Composition].

In a moment——

With their consciousness about to be taken away, a strong [pressure] struck everyone.

She attempted to recover [air], but instead she became [Unable to breath].

Jibril cried out——

"——What! Why——urgh!?"

Then she regretted.

As one of The Heavenly Flügel Winged, her instincts told her that in a brief moment, she inhaled strong [Toxins].

And that toxin was——[Oxygen].

Because of the strong pressure and his blurred vision, Sora let out a hollow laugh.

Jibril really didn't know——[Atoms].

She didn't know what [Oxygen] was.....as a result?

(Once she was unable to breathe, she considered that as another saying of [Air] right?)

The words that Sora spoke out made pure oxygen disappear, but not air.

——Because of the rule [The things that exist will disappear, the things that don't exist will appear].

In the atmosphere where oxygen wasn't present, saying out [Air] would result in what circumstances?

——The answer was in this situation.

Only oxygen in air will appear, while the other gases will disappear.

Thus it results in the 80% pressure where everything left, and——

The space was filled with [Poisonous] oxygen.

With one breath, Sora and Shiro would instantly die, but—

——Sora slowly kissed Shiro.

".....Un."

——Circular breathing.

If the word connector's rule about no direct interference can be caused, then it would be fine as long as the two retained their air circulation.

The intense pressure caused their body to have a feeling of wanting to burst, while their consciousness began to blur.

But they managed to maintain consciousness——only a short time, so as to continued the Word Connector.

The phenomena occurring in front of her, namely Sora's action, was incomprehensible to Jibril.

However, even so, this was all——futile.

"You think that this level of [Poison].....can defeat The Heavenly Winged[The Flügel]?"

Facing against Sora and Shiro who did this in vain, Jibril let out a laugh.

Breathing wasn't that important for The Heavenly Winged[The Flügel], this was already proven true.

All she had to do was stop breathing.

——Wanting to kill The Heavenly Winged[The Flügel], was impossible.

The game was already over.

The heat from the core was about to reach Sora and Shiro who were pointlessly struggling.

(Sure enough, they are only human after all——that's how it is.....)

Jibril looked over to the direction of Sora, her eyes gleaming with excitement.

However——what returned back her gaze was Sora, whose face was——

"——!"

A contempt smile directed towards Jibril.

"Shiro, go up then!!'

"…….Unn!!"

This time the two of them forcefully——spat out air.

——In order to accomplish the next step.

After ensuring that everything aside from oxygen had been eliminated from the [Atmosphere], the air expelled out by Sora had [revitalized] the situation. Then, the both of them shouted out as if squeezing out all the air that remained in their bodies.

""——[Atmosphere (atomosufea)] ! ""

With [Atmosphere] said, this time all the gas disappeared——

"——!?"

Something inside Jibril's body exploded out.

[Zero pressure] was generated as a result of the atmosphere disappearing, thus producing an explosive impact as if the lung was torn apart due to the difference in pressure.

The reason why Sora [Spat] air——was to avoid this phenomenon.

However, even so.

Jibril wasn't killed off yet.

(Still in vain……)

Suffocation? Toxic? Explosion caused by the change in internal pressure?

What could that do?

A battle race created by God to kill God——The Heavenly Flügel Winged.

If that sort of method could kill off The Heavenly Flügel Winged, it was just plain stupid.

A full vacuum state——In this environment, the two who are humans would die off first.

Jibril couldn't stand their idiocy and tried to ridicule them, but when she opened her mouth, she froze.

——Her sound wasn't transmitted.

So-called [Sound], needed a medium to spread through the [Shockwave].

Now this place was a vacuum——to be exact in this space.

If air isn't present as a medium——words can't be conveyed out.

One of the [Failure conditions] flashed past Jibril's mind.

——[Unable to answer within 30 seconds constitutes as a lost].

Then.....the time limit for humans to survive in vacuum is limited to——

(About 30 seconds——Just for this layout!?)

Jibril started to feel a shiver.

Yes——If you can't make the other party be [Unable to continue].

Then just——Bet on the [Survival limit] of 30 seconds, achieving victory using the [30 second rule]——

Just when Jibril came into this conclusion, Sora's face appeared in her view.

He was about to lose consciousness due to the vacuum, or was probably experiencing it already. He held onto his little sister tightly, and revealed a painful smile as if saying 'Satisfied?'.

(——I see, how impressive...)

At this point, Jibril finally changed her evaluation on Sora.

(Indeed, it is too pitiful for you to be a human, however——)

——Jibril can't use magic.

Because as The Heavenly Winged (The Flügel), her body was created with the Elemental.

And also because the current Elemental gallery was also eliminated.

(I will express my gratitude and answer with respect then.)

As long as she dispersed the Elemental——she could write text in the air in the form of light,

——[Weak(anjaku)].

Using human-language, Jibril wrote it in the air.

The humans who were sensible, bet on their emotion, exhausted their wisdom, formulated plans and did everything——but it was still insufficient.

The human kind can never win against The Heavenly Winged.

Humans can never reach the sky——this was a fact that couldn't be overturned.

Sora saw her reply while hugging Shiro, he was gradually losing strength.

His consciousness was gradually blurred.

However, inspite of the desperate situation, they were still nonchalant. Sora then leaked a proud smile and placed his hand on the crystal.

He then removed a pre-written note.

——Written on it was [Coulomb force(ku-ronryoku)].

It——it was only a brief interval.

The atmosphere, the earth's crust and shell was eliminated. In the absence of all the atoms in the space, they could only fall.

The only thing remaining was the iron core of the planet.

The high pressure and temperature of the liquid metal shined radiantly, imprinted into Jibril's retina.

——The core of the planet.....the iron atom of the core.

The [Nuclear force] that attracts atoms together happens when it suffers a resistance stronger than itself, in this case the [Coulomb force].

It only happens when a large star dies, the astronomical phenomena that leads to the collapse of the gravity.

Due to the [Disappearance] of the Coulomb force, the asteroids start to generate a nuclear fusion.

Therefore, the phenomenon that occured, is named in Sora's world as:

The Gamma-Ray Burst(GRB) caused by the collapse of light, is known as——

[Hypernova explosion], enough to evaporate the galaxy for a few light years away.

As a battle race created by God to kill God.

Not dying even with a direct hit by the [Hydrogen bomb], this meant that——

She could withstand the heat of the solar corona, 5 million tons of impact, hypoxia caused by gas evaporation and ultra-vacuum, even toxic substances——this was The Heavenly Winged from the sixth position.

The barrier between her species and humans was a huge performance gap, a giant wall that was unclimbable.

However, that doesn't mean it was unbreachable——

——Today, the weakest race crossed over it.

Although air wasn't present, and sound couldn't be transmitted out.

But Jibril could hear it, the words that Sora muttered out with an erect index finger.

[500 billion degrees Celsius equivalent to the epoch of shock, let's see if you can withstand it, The Heavenly Winged].

——Whether the phenomenon, or [Coulomb force], Jibril didn't know.

However, her instincts as The Heavenly Winged screamed out.

The first explosion was nothing compared to this

And how exactly do they stop it, the concept does not exist in their knowledge.

——[Let the gods of heaven and earth to do naught light], the impending onslaught in less than a millisecond.

(How ——How is it——even if I want to protect——)

However, until now.

Before the elimination of the surface, Sora and Shiro jumped a little bit.

So Jibril was slightly below.

Regardless of what kind of heat would impact on her——it doesn't matter.

The one who die first would lose, this is.....

(This was.....their true intention of taking away the Elemental gallery)

The initial explosion——that was only an experimental [Concept of not knowing each other].

From the explosion, the man had already planned out everything in detail.

He knew from the first fight that, whether it was heat, pressure or poison, it wouldn't kill her.

This series of correspondence was only intended to distract her.

To pretend that he was gambling on the 30 seconds——the [Farce].

Everything was a trap.

As implied by the raised index finger from Sora——From the first step, the game was already over.

The planet issued out a radiance more brilliant than a star, Jibril turned her body over to face Sora.

"——Different world people.....no, human species——what a boggling race."

In this world, the position was absolute.

In this world where battle is forbidden and decisions are based on games, she got [Killed] by a race even lower than the tenth position.

Jibril let out a burst of laughter, and in her mind, the speech from the [King of Human species] got relayed back.

".....Because we were born with nothing, therefore anyone can be the weakest race——is that right?"

Could their hands even hit God.....?

Taking a glance at the corner, she found the unconscious Steph who was vertically falling.

"——With multiple meanings, it really is a mystifying race eh."

She wanted to play with them until she witness their end.

With the final roar resounding through the sky, their consciousness were all dyed with a [Blank].

Part 8

".....I died."

"Oh, welcome back."

"Did you hear it!? I'll say it one more time!? I DIED!! Not a delusion, but a reality!! Because this is important, I'll say it for three times!!"

"But you're still alive, isn't that a saying in a fighting game? [Not dying means earning]."

"So I did die!!"

The aggressive Steph, as if wanting to grip onto Sora's chest, charged towards him while still shouting out.

"You, you, you used me as bait, in the end you still didn't tell me about anything and left me to die!!"

"But you didn't die, so it's fine."

"You—You—"

Her patience was almost stretched to the limit.

This was the time, where the rage that she stored inside for this man should be released——

Then, at the same time when Steph opened her mouth, Sora said:

"But without Steph, we would've lost."

"Eh....."

If she didn't incite away the materialized enemy.

As Jibril had said, it's easy to force Sora and Shiro to be unable to continue the game.

"And thanks to that, we can get Jibril, you'll also get a part for saving the human species oh."

".....Eh.....Aa....."

"Thank you, Steph, sorry for always leaving you with the hard job."

Sora stroked her head.

Like a puff of smoke, her anger that rivaled a volcano that was about to erupt dispersed.

"Eh.....ah, un, ye,yeah.....th,that is true."

Steph's face started to flush, not from the anger. She lowered her head and started playing with her fingers.

"Th, that is true, if I work harder, Elchea will be saved.....an, and thank you Sora for your psychological warfare.....right....."

Steph stammered a bunch, her face also gradually becoming normal, but then Shiro said:

"....Nii.....from the king.....transfer into.....a bitch?"

"How rude, that's because it's so easy to fool Steph."

"I heard ittttttttt!!! Ah~~~~ damn it! I really hate you! Really really hate you!!"

Steph started to curse God.

(Our sole god, why did you forbid violence?)

(There is a man here, even if I have to abandon my life, I want to beat him up.)

".....I completely lost."

Jibril muttered out while respectfully saluting, as if the horror from just now was false. The library returned back to the situation before the start of the game, Jibril sat in the center and drank tea, before breathing out a sigh of relief.

".....Can I ask a question?"

"Un?"

"I know you guided me to answer [Weak (jaku)] this word out, but....."

In order to let themselves be aware of the word [Weak], the anger exhibited out by Sora was also an act.

However, even so——

"There are still other infinite possibilities.....if you meet that kind of situation, what would you do?"

"I had twenty other answers, if those didn't happen, then I would be clueless."

Sora easily said so with a smile, but Jibril understood in her heart.

This man——in a short period of time, completely saw through her personality and [Predicted] out twenty others.

But, even so, it was still a dangerous bet.

In addition to Jibril speaking out that word, without any guarantee of the game, the man even calculated the time to bluff as well as his survival time, Jibril could only harbor [Respect] for this man.

"Your mentality is insane."

——Hearing that sentence, Sora revealed a wry smile and answered back.

Ever since she was born six thousand years ago, she couldn't help but widen her eyes when she heard [That phrase].

"I want to challenge [God]——would a sane person do it?"

Those words flowed into Jibril's ears like a gospel, numbing her mind.

——Challenging God.

Against the sole God TET.

Jibril——although she didn't want to hear anything negative, she still felt the need to reconfirm it. With a determined expression, she asked Sora:

"Are you.....serious?"

"Of course I am, and besides, aren't you surprised as to how I was summoned into this world?"

As if revealing an answer, Sora told the truth.

"I'll say it out, the one who called us into this world was——TET."

Jibril was stunned speechless.

"After we played a game and beat him, he then pulled us into this world like a child, wanting us to win using this world's rules. This was his initiative to provoke us, so aside from overthrowing him, we don't have any other options."

Just because of this reason, they are intent on snatching the throne of God.

"This is why, Jibril, in accordance to the Oaths, your everything belongs to me from now on."

Towards Sora who made such a declaration, Jibril watched him with the same eyes as though looking at something dazzling.

"To win against God, there are preparations to be made, but due to the situation of the human race, what we can do is limited. We need more power, knowledge and betting chips, more importantly your knowledge and presence can also be useful."

——Jibril was like Virgin Mary who suffered the Will of God.

"Ah, and for the books that are installed in my tablet, I just used it as bait only, you are free to read all the books inside it. Also, in order for us outer beings to conquer the world, we need [Insight], so if we are able enhance Jibril's knowledge, then you are free to utilize the knowledge inside it."

Jibril started tearing as she watched Sora continue with her intoxicated eyes.

"Furthermore, you can continue using this library, but Imanity also needs the library, so we can give some to the college for use, I will leave the management to Jibril, is that alright?"

Hearing the string of words.

Jibril kneeled towards Sora.

She shed a tear, and started to clasp her hand together, no, she was indeed bowed in prayer.

"Ahhhh, deceased masters that created us...Artosh-sama.....I have finally found the new [Master] worthy of being served, our vows are finally realized....."

"Eh, what kind of reaction is this.....?"

Seeing her reaction, Steph disappointingly hung her shoulders and said:

"I, I'll warn you first, this pair of siblings are perverts!? They will dress you shamefully, force you to be a dog; vicious mouths, inhumane, personalities that are full of defects, the worst kind of perverted siblings okay!?"

".....Steph.....paw....."

"You, you see! They would do such a thing!!"

However, as if she were in a trance, Jibril quietly answered:

"........So what is the problem?"

"Eh.....?"

"Being victorious against the shameless God that wins without fighting, bringing huge knowledge from a different world, defeating elves as well as The Heavenly Winged. They are the ones that subvert the concept of the human race."

Keeping her wings away, she moved the halo to the back of her head and bowed.

This was The Heavenly Winged (The Flügel) way——of showing absolute loyalty to their masters.

"My master, my prince, my king."

"Good good."

"——The Heavenly Winged (The Flügel) of the sixth position belonging to the 【16 races】, a member of the 8 council members, Jibril."

As if praying before God, she respectfully said:

"My everything belongs to master, my thoughts, my power, even every inch of my body is the property of my master. Letting me be the cornerstone of your will, it is my utmost pleasure."

"Whoa, leave it to us, right, Shiro?"

".....Un, leave it to us....."

Hearing the last command——while maintaining the gesture of [Paw].

Steph's endless cries echoed in the library.

Part 9

'Ka peng'.....

Although this sound wasn't really there.

But it could be counted as today's bath time.

Ever since coming to this world, this was her second bath.

".....I think it is better for me to wash, Sora should wear the clothes."

"I didn't install cameras today, so you don't have to bother. Also Shiro, you should get accustomed to bathing."

Shiro had an unhappy expression today.

"Because hair.....will become hard...I don't like....."

"Having said that, today's exercise was quite intense, no matter what you should have a wash."

No matter if it's Shiro, or any other human being, nobody probably had experience with such a compactful day.

"With that being the case——"

All of a sudden, Jibril let out her voice.

"Whoa! Jibril, where did you come out from!?"

"I would come out regardless of master's location, and ah, more importantly, if you have hair troubles, you should try this bottle of shampoo."

Jibril spoke while retrieving out a bottle of shampoo.

"This is the one that we The Heavenly (The Flügel) Winged use, blended with Elemental water, it would keep the hair beautiful and not damage it. Also, it will be easier to shape and you will be guaranteed to have elegant hair."

The Heavenly (The Flügel) Winged spoke as if advertising, but Sora——

"Let me point out the problem first——why aren't you wearing any clothing!"

"......Un."

Hearing that sentence, Shiro wanted to look.

"Steph, don't let Shiro turn her head around! This is a scene a minor can't see."

"No problem, with this much steam, I probably won't violate what master says about [Ethical requirement]."

".....Wu.....Jibril.....capable child....."

Shiro replied, but Sora thought differently in his heart.

"No, the problem is if you are going to deliver shampoo, why must you be naked!"

Facing this question, Jibril went on her knees and bowed her head towards Sora before replying:

"You ask this, is because Jibril is the slave of master, and it is a duty for a slave to wash her master's back, so of course I came here to help you wash your hehe.....he,hehehe....."

"Your expression is totally different from a slave! This is just your desires for [Outer world knowledge]!"

Her intentions was of course to reconfirm the details she had yet to complete before the Word Connector game. However——

".....Jibril.....[Stop]....."

"Ah——!?"

Once Shiro gave the order, Jibril immediately sat on the floor.

"Ehh? Weird? What is happening?"

Although she became Sora's property, even swearing allegiance to him.

But the coercive power of the Oaths should only be limited to Sora only.

".....Ah, yes. because the things Shiro and I have are shared....."

Since Jibril belongs to Sora, then it automatically belongs to Shiro too.

Slower than Shiro by one step, Sora also figured out this fact.

"......Shampoo.....I accept.....But prohibit.....Mature 18 scene."

"As, as expected of Shiro——that kind of calm really makes your brother proud....."

Sora couldn't help but swallow saliva.

But Shiro was as calm as always.

"".....Jibril.....is only allowed to see....."

"Wuahh~~! Why~! There is full of steam here, it's too torturing for me!"

She seemed to learn from Sora on how to treat Jibril.

Sora was unable to see Shiro who was being washed by Steph.

But he frankly understood the situation.

".....How strong, Shiro-sama, your methods of dealing with Jibril are too great.....I am touched."

Then——

"".....For this kind of situation, I'm starting to get used to it, I really hate myself....."

Steph remarked.

As for herself who was gradually deviating from the road, she smiled while shedding a tear.

Chapter 3 - Sacrifice/Sacrificial Move

Part 1

In a suburb a short distance from the center of Elchea city. The Great National Library of Elchea.

It had technically been won back from Jibril, but it was still under her control.

Steph was in the kitchen that Jibril had arbitrarily installed in there.

From her drawn out face, it was evident that she had not been sleeping well.

"......Maybe it would have been better if they had just stayed shut ins in the Royal Bedroom....."

After retaking the library, Sora and Shiro had holed themselves up in there instead.

Whilst taking care of internal affairs, Steph had to come to the library to report, and also to brew tea.

"Why do I have to go this far.....I'm not a tea set, you know?"

However, as she grumbled.

Her mind would flash back to that scene after the fight with Jibril.

"Thanks, Steph."

—Kyun.....

"It's all because of these implanted emotions! I'm just being used!!"

Crying and burying her head in the wall had become a daily routine for Steph.

She abruptly heard a voice.

"Ah, Dora-chan. Thanks for your work."

"Didn't I tell you not to call me Dora-chan!? Rather, when did you get there!!"

The door had silently been opened, and Jibril stood there as if she had been there from the beginning.

"A message from master."

"Hah? Um, go on....."

"Uh—"There are things such as sugar and butter in Jibril's kitchen. Well, it seems like those're all

mine now, so feel free to use them as you like"—end message."

"......eh?"

She could use sugar...and butter?

T-then, the variety of sweets she could make is now so much greate—

"Wait, isn't that just an indirect order to make sweets! How far must I be used before he's satisfied!! All I want is something like 'you can rest'!!"

Bangbangbang.

"Sorry for agitating you to the point of you banging your head."

As Jibril spoke, she took out a note.

"This is from my recipe book collection that the master says he's particularly keen on."

"Ah, I'll take it ♥ Thank yo—oh."

As Jibril eyed her with interest, Steph frantically waved her hands as her face turned bright red.

"It's not—this is....."

"I've heard. The master commanded you to 'fall in love' or something."

"Y, yeah, that's right! Not to mention, he totally tricked me into it!! Unbelievable, right!?"

Steph jumped on the chance to excuse her own actions.

On the other hand, Jibril still looked curious.

"I wouldn't know. I'm rather ignorant of Imanity romantic feelings. Sorry about that."

"Eh, is, is that so?"

"Yes. We as a race do not breed unless there is a need. If the master is loving that is sufficient. The subtleties of these romantic feelings which Imanity has cannot be understood merely through hearsay."

Master—that being Sora.

To Jibril, who had just flatly stated 'love'.

"Eh, ah.....uhm, by love.....do you mean between master and servant?"

"I am not very clear on the distinction. What is the difference from normal love?"

"That, that would be.....when your chest hurts seeing them with others, being anxious when you're not with them, things like th.....huh?"

Suddenly it came to her, her first love—was the one who had forcibly made her fall for him, Sora.

—That being, she realised that all these things she had just described were what she felt for Sora.

She also realised that Jibril, grinning, had heard everything.

As her face burned even redder, she quickly said,

"Th-that, that's, that's the general idea, just the idea! I, I certainly have not had any such experience—"

As she attempted to cover for herself with utterly unconvincing words, Jibril just smiled.

"I see. Then, since I've delivered my message, I'll leave it at that."

"Ah, right.....thank you for your—huh?"

She was gone.

The moment she had looked away.....where to?

.....—Flutter

The recipe of the cake Sora was interested in, now upon Steph's desk, caught her view.

"Oh, well.....if I can use sugar, there are sweets I'd like to make myself. It's the same time and effort making for one as for a group, so why not. Yeah, that's it. Incidental, it's just incidental."

Steph began to bustle around Jibril's kitchen.

"Hm.....now I just have to find where everything is....."

"About that."

"Hiiyaaa!?"

Again, Jibril had materialised behind her without a sound.

"The necessary cooking utensils are over there. Dishes are there. Ingredients and seasonings are on the top shelf. The tea set is over there. The oven is from Avant Heim, so I've summarised the instructions for its use in your language here. Now then, please feel free to use them."

"Eh, ah, yes.....you're very gracious, thank you, very much."

Steph replied with confused emotions.

"It's fine, everything is for the master. Excuse me."

She vanished again.

For the master.....at those words, Steph felt uneasy.

Was the feeling of something restraining her just her imagination?

She shook her head.

"It's! For! Myself!! Alright, let's make something so delicious it'll amaze even me!!"

Again in her mind, a scene from after the battle with Jibril flashed by.

As he stroked her head—now the words were different.

"You did well, Steph. Thank you."

"That's・not・it!"

She smacked both hands onto the table.

"I said that's not the case alreadyyyyyyyyyy!"

Bang bang, she started pounding her head against the table.

Outside the door was Jibril.

"....'Fall in love with me', as expected of the master; such an interesting request."

She was watching something even more interesting now though.

For Jibril who knew little about the emotional workings of Imanity, she understood the concept of romantic feelings as knowledge only.

"If the order had been for just a moment, then the effect should have lasted only a moment as well—yet despite not having been ordered to 'keep loving me', why is Dora-chan displaying more permanent effects? Fufu, curious indeed."

Smiling slyly, Jibril disappeared into the air.

"Eh—red.....hyaaa, bloooood!? Uynn....."

Having fainted at the sight of her own blood, the preparations took a considerably longer time to complete.

Part 2

Steph was now salved and bandaged.

Completely recovered from her faint, she trudged back with tea and cakes for four.

"Fufufu, it's perfect this time, you know?"

Believing herself invincible after having recovered sugar and butter, Steph was excited.

Perhaps wanting praise from Sora, not that she would have admitted it to herself, she headed towards the room in the very back of the library. And found out she couldn't open the door with both hands full.

"For some reason I'm getting a sense of deja vu from this."

If that were the case, the punch line when she opened the door would be that there was no one there.....she thought.

Fortunately, the scene which greeted her was not as she had sensed.

"So, Jibril-kun."

With a fully serious face, a man was questioning Jibril.

"Won't you tell me about the kemonomimi kingdom I intend to conquer, the 'Eastern Union'?"

.....A man you really didn't want to believe held the fate of Imanity in his hands.

"Certainly. The Eastern Union is a nation with complex circumstances."

The Eastern Union—country of the fourteenth ranked species, the 'Werebeasts'.

Although they're all grouped under the name Werebeasts, even just separating by their physical features there were countless different tribes.

For many years they had been locked in a cycle between civil wars and negotiated peace, a small country of islands with little uniformity.

Then one known as the 'Miko' had appeared, pacified the country in just half a century, and now they had merged into a gigantic maritime nation counted as one of the three world powers.

"About the different physical characteristics.....does that mean there are things like fox ears and cat ears?"

Jibril replied to Sora's question with a straight face.

"Yes. Besides their appearances however, their abilities differ as well. I do not believe the name Werebeast was given to them merely because of their animal-like bodies. Both individually and as a race their strength approaches the physical limit; some are even able to read thoughts. Those with that capability are known as 'kekkai'."

"Hm, well, I get the general idea—now then."

"All the kemonomimikos are mine, so without further ado how do we set about taking down the Eastern Union!"

—This king is no good at all.

"As unfortunate as it is master, I think that is [impossible]."

The one who poured water on that idea was surprisingly the one who called Sora master, Jibril.

"Wh—Jibril, do you know why we recruited someone as intelligent as yourself!? It was all for this perfect plan which met both my personal and the national interest so well, that being the capture of all the kemonomimi girls, so just what is this you're saying!"

In face of this fluent confusion between self-interest and private and public affairs, Jibril maintained her stance.

"I am very sorry. However—even if it's you two masters, I do not believe you are able to win against the Eastern Union."

At those words not only Sora, but also Shiro who was next to him reading a book.

Suddenly narrowed their eyes, and stared at Jibril.

"Oh.....are you implying that 『Kuuhaku』 would lose?"

"No, that's not quite the right meaning. I suppose a better expression would be, I cannot meet your expectations."

Because—

"I too have once gone to challenge the Eastern Union—and [lost]."

.....What.....?

".....Seriously? Eh, at shiritori?"

"No, that device is here after all."

.....There's a game capable of beating this eccentric, all-rounded peak humanoid weapon?

"It is probably the game which they specified."

—[Probably]?

"In addition, the Elves—Elven Gard, have officially challenged the Eastern Union four times these past 50 years to official [Territory Games], and lost every time."

Jibril didn't seem to want to admit it, but she dutifully spoke the truth.

More importantly however—

Sora understood the meaning behind those words.

He also deduced why Jibril had said it was [impossible].

".....I can hardly believe it, but."

If that really was the case—then it certainly explained things.

"Did the Eastern Union.....put erasing of memories pertaining to the game' as one of the conditions?"

—The meaning was that as they were, they had no chance of victory.

Jibril bowed her head respectfully and answered.

"It is as you said, master. For that reason, there is no one who knows just what the game was or is."

.....Is that so. The race with their excellent five senses and even a sixth, the ability to read the heart.

Their game was concealed to the point of erasing it from their opponents memories.

An investigative expedition would be impossible. Losing and developing strategies for the next time would also be impossible.

Challenging without any information would be suicidal for sure.

—Thinking things over, however, there were some things which stuck out.

"Elven Gard lost.....[four times]?"

Elven Gard.

The craftiness of the Elves was already well known to them through the events of the King Selection games.

Even though they had only helped indirectly, without being forewarned they would certainly have lost.

They were strong opponents who could keep fighting even after being breached two or three times.

Moreover, they were the world's largest country. Being able to stand against them meant—

"Right, and so I—[suspected the involvement of a greater power]."

Like what Elven Gard had attempted to do with Elchea.

The reason the Eastern Union could brush off the attacks of the Elves was because they were already the puppet government of someone else.

"I was not able to resist trying to find out if that were the case and if so, who it was—"

"So you challenged them and ended up having the tables turned."

".....As embarrassing as it is, that's true."

Right. The reason for Jibril's 'impossible' was clear.

Without knowing the game and being unable to bluff, there were absolutely no countermeasures.

Against Imanity who could count only upon plans and cunning as their sole weapons, they could be said to be the perfect enemy.

—However, there was still a snag.

".....In this world the overwhelming advantage goes to those who are 'prepared'."

Fifth of the [Ten Oaths], the challenged party has the right to decide the contents of the game.

Being able to select a game advantageous to you would obviously confer the advantage.

"If you erase everyone's memories of the fight, however—people would [stop attacking you]."

That's right.

In the world Sora came from, an analogy would be 'nuclear deterrence'.

No one would try to pick a fight against someone they absolutely couldn't defeat.

".....Non-aggressive, national security.....?"

Shiro predicted the Eastern Union's stance from the results of their policy.

Sora pointed something out, however.

"Shiro, this is why you lose to Onii-chan in strategy games even though you're so much smarter. [That would be boring]."

If they had an 'ace in the hole' capable of laying low both the Elves and the Flugel, why would they focus only on defense.

Because deliberately showing an opening, letting them use their tricks, and then beating them at their own game was far more satisfying.

".....Nii, your.....playing, style.....annoying."

"If you call the strategy your onii-chan so desperately wracked his head to come up with annoying, I'll collapse, you know!?"

His point stood, however. Shiro admitted to her mistake.

".....A country, which suddenly expanded, 50 years.....having a, non-aggressive policy.....strange."

"R-right?"

Sora hugged Shiro, his eyes filled with tears.

These siblings truly are strange, Jibril thought as she tilted her head.

"The fact of the matter is, in the past decade, no one has made a move against the Eastern Union—"

.....Jibril then laughed.

"Or rather, there was actually.....just one country."

".....nn....."

"Eh, what, who?"

Only Jibril and Shiro responded.

Shiro possibly already knew from reading one of Jibril's books, but Sora was still clueless.

(—Ah, this is a pretty terrible development.)

Sensing an impending danger, Steph quietly stood and tried to leave the room.

"It'll be quicker to show you. Of course, Dora-chan has to come too ♪"

"Hau!?"

Caught by surprise and grabbed, Steph cried out.

"Now then, everyone, please hold on to me."

"Hold on?"

As they spoke, both Sora and Shiro took hold of Jibril's clothes.

"Please make sure you don't let go—now, let's be off."

The moment Jibril uttered those words.

At the sound of shattering glass, they squeezed their eyes shut—in one instance.

Sora slowly opened his eyes, and what stretched before him.....was it his imagination?

Still, floating thousands of meters above the ground, the view was certainly splendid.

"It's nice and sunny today. You should be able to see—"

"Wait, wait up, Jibril, before that—what did you do!?"

Sora held up Jibril who had continued speaking as if nothing had happened.

Having just been thrown up incredibly high into thin air, Sora naturally sought an explanation.

However Jibril replied in a bewildered manner.

"What, you ask.....I merely shifted us."

Speaking of [teleportation] as if it were nothing, Sora understood,

.....Of course, no wonder she can randomly appear all over the place.

So she was a teleporter. It was something he had understood conceptually, but now he was convinced.

".....Just how far can you shift?"

"Anywhere within sight. Anywhere I've previously been to can also be [traveled back to indefinitely]."

—Right now, Sora and Shiro were pondering over one of the greatest mysteries of this world.

"—Hey Shiro, how did Imanity survive the ancient war?"

".....Who knows.....?"

The Werebeasts are physically supreme, the Elves are surpassingly cunning and beings like Jibril are pure hax, just how were they fought?

All the inhabitants of this world had but one reply.

".....That is a mystery of Imanity's history....."

Steph sighed.

"Wasn't it simply because no one bothered to spare Imanity so much as a second glance?"

Jibril answered with a broad smile.

"We of the Heavenly Winged warred mainly against the dragons, giants and old gods. It took around 50 of us Flugel to take on a dragon, and 200 to challenge one of the gods."

.....The race which needed a supernova to finally kill, could teleport around, and soared freely through the sky.

They had fought monsters which even 200 of them could not defeat.

"Then a different question."

"—Why did this world not keep its original form?"

Jibril could only reply with a wry smile.

"That answer lies with the [sole surviving god and default victor]."

.....A changed.....world.

"More importantly, please look over there."

Smiling to shake away the bitter memories, Jibril pointed.

Looking carefully from the sky, they were near the border of Elchea.

Within the border, in Elchean territory, a majestic tower rose into the air.

A...majestic...tower.

Meaning—it clearly was not built by human hands.

"......Uhm, what's that.....[high building]?"

It resembled the Empire State building in America.

"......Huge."

Even Shiro's eyes widened.

It was just barely possible to make out the foundations.

It was located in a gap between the buildings of a human street.

"Dora-chan, please go ahead and explain."

Dropping her shoulders as if to say 'I knew it would come down to this', Steph spoke.

"......That's the Eastern Union's [Elchean Embassy]."

".....Hou, the Eastern Union."

Stealing a glance at Sora, Steph averted her face.

"T-to be accurate, it's—the site of our [former] Royal Palace."

".....What."

Sora trained his eyes on Steph.

Trying to escape that gaze, Steph craned her neck even further away.

"M-my grandfather, bet...the Royal Palace."

".....And, lost....."

His ruthless sister uttered one word.

"....."

Both Sora and Shiro were at a loss for words, and Jibril wore a pleasant smile as if looking at a puppy.

"W-why are you looking at me with those eyes!"

"The Royal Palace of our [Capital] is someone else's embassy....."

"Uguuu....."

Hmm.....Sora considered.

"So, why was the palace taken by the Eastern Union?"

"Actually—that entire area was taken over, if I recall correctly."

"——Hah?"

Sora's eyes widened at Jibril's smiling words.

His sister had to explain the information she had memorized.

".....This decade, the previous king.....challenged the Eastern Union [eight times].....and, lost."

"Eight.....w-well, I get the intentions of the Eastern Union. If it's that state-of-the-art 'maritime nation'—"

One of the drawbacks of a maritime nation was the lack of stone and iron; the dearth of resources not found in the marine environment.

Seeing the architecture of that building, it was evident that they were a fairly advanced civilization.

They would require many rare metals and other resources not found in an archipelago.

It would only be a matter of course to search for them in the continent—however.

"The challengers would have been the Eastern Union, right? Why answer?"

At that, Shiro shook her head.

And Jibril replied.

"Master, have you forgotten? The sole country which challenged the Eastern Union this past decade....."

".....The challenger, was.....[Elchea]....."

.....Just, what.....?

"First was that mountain. Then that plain, then.....and so on and so forth, until finally they reached the royal palace in the center of the country, and the result is as you see now."

Jibril had taken them into the sky precisely to show them this.

"Nonono, wait, back then that was the center of the country?"

Sora spoke while pointing to the Empire State Building (temporarily named).

"Are you kidding me? He bet the country away eight times? Against somebody Elven Gard lost to 4 times? Imanity did this? That's just beyond stupid. Please stop with the jokes—"

Shiro simply sighed, yet Sora continued to shake his head.

"Wait, wait a minute? Then Elchea's territory was over twice what it is now?"

Jibril and Shiro nodded.

Sora placed a hand to his brow as Steph became silent.

".....Jibril, please take us back to the library for a bit."

"I am sorry, are you afraid of heights?"

"No, it's just I can't think clearly up here, I need the floor for that."

Part 3

Back in the library.

Sora sat cross-legged upon the table, cradling his head.

All that left his mouth were sighs.

Perched in his lap, Shiro looked at Sora anxiously.

"......Nii......all, right.....?"

"......Ahh, my bad, Shiro, I was just in despair for a bit."

It pained him to cause worry for his sister, but even so, he couldn't help speaking.

"I had thought the previous king was terrifyingly idiotic, but now I have to consider whether he was an alcoholic or something as well....."

Sighhhhhh~~~~~~.....

"T-that's so rude!!"

She smacked down on the table Sora sat on.

"Earlier, didn't you say what my grandfather did wasn't wrong!!"

Sora, however, merely heaved a grand sigh.

"—Just how do I cover for a guy who threw away half the country in futile challenges?"

Sora pointed out the window in the direction of the 'dispossessed territory'.

"If we had that land, just how much farming and industry could we achieve? If your grandfather had been able to keep betting like those moron nobles who eventually lost even their underwear, would we even have any territory left today?"

"T-that's——!!"

Perhaps unable to stop now that he had started, Sora just kept going.

"Ah, right, he was [your grandfather] after all.....probably believing in [luck], that if he tried enough he'd definitely win someday.....the opponent was a [nation], did he seriously not understand the implications?"

Compared to personal games, [national warfare] was on a completely different level.

One entrusted with full authority, responsible for the lives of others, thus fought with those very lives at stake.

That was national warfare—[territorial gambling].

Fighting over the border which would define all that the people, the nation possessed; [total war].

To challenge those aware of that eight times—.

"Blaming it on drink may be one of the kinder interpretations here....."

Steph, however, stood stock still, looking down at the ground with shoulders trembling.

"My grandfather—certainly.....was bad at games....."

And yet—lifting her head, she cried out.

"Carrying the lives of millions of Imanity on his shoulders, he never did anything that would affect his thinking! Unlike you two, he was a man of common sense!"

That admirable person had brought them to this, however.

"If negligently throwing away half the country is 'common sense', then I'd gladly be abnormal any day."

"~Whatever!!"

Shaking, yet unable to refute Sora's words, Steph ran from the room with tears in her eyes.

Looking at her retreating back, Shiro spoke.

".....Nii.....too, far....."

".....After showing me something like that, just how was I supposed to react....."

The tension from earlier evaporated.

Perhaps because he had much to consider, Sora's depression switch seemed to have been completely turned off.

—Suddenly.

They finally noticed the tea and sweets Steph had placed on the table earlier.

Faster than Sora, Shiro crammed one into her mouth.

"......De, licious.....♪"

Hearing Shiro speak in a voice different from her normal flat tone, Sora reluctantly picked one up too.

"......Shit, it really is good....."

Sweet, yet not overbearingly so, and fluffy.

The sweets Steph had made the other day had been amazing as well, but this eclipsed those by far.

She had probably followed the recipe painstakingly.

He imagined her figure in the kitchen, struggling even to make the arrangement perfect.

Shiro stared at Sora. Jibril merely closed her eyes, awaiting instructions.

Tearing at his head, Sora gave up.

".....Ahhhhhhhhhh——fine I get it, [I'll try]!"

Part 4

Elchea royal palace, former king's bedroom.

Sora had actually gone ahead and begun construction on a house in the courtyard, returning the bedroom to Steph.

In that titanic, literally king-sized bed.

Steph lay sobbing.

"Liar.....and you had even said you'd prove that grandfather was right....."

Lying face down, Steph wet the pillows with her tears.

"Grandfather.....wasn't a, bad king!"

She squeezed the key she always carried on her and recalled her grandfather.

————————.....

"Grandfather, what is this key?"

"H-he~ey Stephanie, you can't touch that."

"Why? What is it for?"

"This key is for entering a place precious to grandpa."

"Precious? Ah, father mentioned that."

"Grandfather has some books that he 'cannot show to people'."

"W, waitwaitwait, Stephanie! That's totally different!"

"T,this is—the [key of hope]."

"Hope.....? Of what?"

"Hoho.....someday, I'll give this to you, Stephanie."

"Really!?"

"Yeah.....but, Stephanie, listen carefully."

"One day, when you meet the ones who you believe from your heart you can entrust Elchea to, give this key to them in turn."

————————.....

She suddenly remembered those events from 10 years ago.

She had received this key from her grandfather two years ago as his death approached.

She still didn't know what it was for, but she had never let it go.

Just why did she recall that now.

—Sora. Him. The one who had insulted her grandfather.

Even though there should be no way she would pass it on to him.

"Dora-chan, do you have a moment?"

"Hyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

Jibril suddenly appeared out of thin air to peek at her from the bedside.

Letting out a cry, Steph jumped up in surprise.

"W-w-w-w-what the heck!? This is trespassing, you know!?"

"There's something I'd like to tell you, so please don't mind."

No, that's not the problem here.

"From now, I think you can return to the library."

"—Hah? From now? Just when—"

It didn't seem like Jibril was listening.

She simply bowed and continued at her own pace.

"I determined this would be best for master, and came of my own accord. What you will do is

likewise up to you."

Having arbitrarily said her piece, she disappeared again.

.....The thought processes of the Flugel really are different from those of Imanity.

Still rather confused, Steph nonetheless thought over Jibril's words.

You can go back to Sora now, was probably what she was trying to convey.

"......Don't joke around, after that, how could I forgive him!"

She threw a blanket over herself as she said so.

Yet the steady ticking of the clock in the room made her suddenly aware of just how red and puffy her eyes were. She recalled the words of her grandfather. The one whom Sora had insulted so.

Perhaps it had been Jibril's speaking, or perhaps there was a reason she remembered them now.

".....Ahhn, jeeeeeez~~~~~~!"

Throwing off the blankets, Steph got out of bed.

Part 5

Elchea national library.

She had gone in countless times already, yet this time Steph quietly snuck inside.

Sora and the others were, as usual, in the back room.

Having made up her mind, as she approached the room the door opened slightly.

Peeping in, there was Sora and Shiro, and Jibril as well.

"Master, it's about time you rest....."

"Nnn.....just a bit longer....."

Flipping through a book, without taking his eyes off the map, Sora answered absent-mindedly.

Jibril spoke as she drew a blanket over Shiro, sleeping huddled in Sora's lap.

"However much you look, it's impossible to defend the folly of the previous king."

Jibril flashed a glance, as if aware of Steph's presence, and startled she hid away.

.....Although however much she tried, there was no way she could hide from the Flugel.

That didn't seem to be the case for Sora however.

Showing no signs of noticing anything, Sora replied in an unhappy tone.

"—It's not like that's my sole intention. I simply noticed an [anomaly]."

"Rather, you're 'finding' one for Dora-chan.....wouldn't you say?"

"I'm just going through these records to determine what not to do when setting about my nekomimi kingdom conquest! That's all!"

Sora seemed quite dissatisfied with Jibril's wry smile.

"So, what's the anomaly?"

"Right.....there are several."

As Jibril laughed in amusement, Sora replied while still looking sour.

"The thing mentioned this morning—why would the Eastern Union [erase memories]?"

As a deterrent, the result would be no more challengers. The benefits would be slim.

Placing her hand on her chin, Jibril seriously considered.

"Having expanded their territory so much, devoting themselves to defense doesn't seem too far of a stretch."

"It's natural to think so. The only one who challenged them this decade was the previous king after all."

If that was their goal, then they were most successful.

If so however, then why had the previous king fought eight times?

"Well, that's how Imanity is after all ♪"

To Jibril who said so laughingly.

"I had also worried over that. But something's strange."

Sora spoke deadpan.

"It's not something a 'sensible' person responsible for the lives of millions would do."

It was as if Sora had read her mind.

Behind the door, Steph drew a breath.

"Then I examined the continental territory of the Eastern Union."

As he spoke, he pointed to the map.

"To start with, this mountainous alumatite mine.....the previous king bet that [first]."

According to Jibril's books, the melting point of [alumatite] was 3000 degrees.

With the metal processing technology Imanity currently possesses, it has no value.

"Next, these plains. They've become the cornerstone of the Eastern Union's extensive agriculture.....the previous king bet them [second]."

They were what they are now however due to the Eastern Union's development.

At the time of the challenges they had been no more than mere [bogs], and worthless as land.

"Third was this coal mine. That's a resource Imanity also cannot utilise. Likewise the fourth, fifth, sixth times.....to the eighth time when he bet the royal palace, the previous king never once bet [something of value]."

But more than anything else. Sora jabbed at the map.

"All of the Eastern Union's continental land—all of it [used to be Elchea's] did it not?"

The continental land which the Eastern Union had won.

All of it had been gained from the previous king.

".....All the continental resources the Eastern Union needed, had been taken from the previous king?"

"That's just the result. The thing is before all this, the Eastern Union had no continental land."

Which meant:

"The ones who were cornered—was the [Eastern Union]."

An advanced technological nation like that, even able to utilise resources requiring a 3000 degree melting point.

A civilisation like that would [absolutely require] continental resources.

In this game where everything is decided by games, even 'trade' would be determined by games.

For the defensively orientated Eastern Union, it could be said to be a critical situation.

"But what the previous king had consistently been playing for was 'one of the Eastern Union's coastal cities'."

That would provide marine resources as well as technological advancements. It was a good bet.

If it was the Eastern Union that was pressured however, he should have been able to press for more.

Why then had he continued eight times.

Doling out land useless to Imanity a little at a time.

"The only conclusion I can come up with, is that it was intentional....."

Why—did the Eastern Union persist with its disadvantageous amnesia.

Why—did Elven Gard challenge four times.

Why—.....no wait. Wrong.

"Why.....did the previous king stop after eight times?"

Consider the reverse.

Not how many times they challenged, but why they stopped at the number they did.

Right up to the eighth time, that being the royal palace, he had wagered only things of little value.

The seventh or ninth times should have been just as good.

Why eight?

Having thought that far.

Sora came up with a single hypothesis.

"What if the previous king, had not been losing his memory?"

Spreading out the map and the accompanying figures, he collated the data he had collected together.

He stared at the borders spanning many years, and rapidly confirmed his thoughts.

It was still a theory full of holes, yet worth considering nonetheless.

There were two particularly glaring holes.

How had he avoided losing his memories.

And—

As Sora was in the middle of thinking.

Sheepishly, as if reluctant to speak up, Jibril muttered.

"Master. Master, your classification certainly is 'Imanity'."

"Nn, eh? Of course it is?"

Still deep in thought, Sora looked at Jibril who had interrupted his thinking.

"But not all of Imanity acts as wisely as Master."

She said this euphemistically to Sora, who was trying to come up with a legitimate reason for the previous king's folly.

These words were as far as she could go speaking as a servant to her master.

A servant is not allowed to doubt their master; Jibril chided herself.

But Sora spoke without hesitation.

"There are definitely [those who have it together] as well. And generally, those guys are—incomprehensible."

This time, Sora glared at the data compiled on his tablet PC.

"Trying to understand that is my 'duty'."

It was as if he had read Jibril's mind.

"Jibril, it's alright to speak freely."

"Imanity here is small, powerless, coarse and uncivilized. Why do you believe in [the Imanity of this world] who from your perspective, mentally and physically, must be no more than animals—that's what you wanted to say right?"

"—No, that's not quite....."

.....That was exactly it.

Whatever follies the previous king had committed, it should all be able to be put away by blaming it on Imanity's behaviour in general.

Sora and Shiro, by their own admittance, were classified as Imanity.

However the reason Jibril followed them was because they were not [lower organisms] such as Imanity.

Sora and Shiro were two beings who broke the mold of all common sense.

Thus Sora's following words.

"The answer is quite simple—I don't believe in [humanity]."

"Eh?"

Both Jibril, and Steph listening in outside, couldn't believe their ears.

"Shiro and I are not from this world, so you must think that we're different from Imanity in this world, but actually nothing is different back where we came from. Everyone, everywhere is vulgar and

stupid—including me."

Sora's face as he spoke those self-mocking words was—.....in various ways, full of despair.

—That world of the past, covered in optic fibre.

A world that had been compressed to the limit, possessing untold intelligence and cultured wisdom.

And yet.....that technology had simply led to a vast flood of information.

As for why.....all pointed towards that wherever they were, humans were foolish things.

".....Humans are shit. Even if the world changes, that never will."

As Sora spoke in disgust, Steph clenched the key in her hand.

—There was no way she could entrust her grandfather's key to Sora after all.

There was no way.....she could believe in this man.

Thinking so, Steph began to move away.

"However—I believe in [that possibility]."

—But Sora's words did not stop.

Dusting the ground next to Sora as if preparing to sit, Jibril knelt down.

"The reason is—her."

Sora spoke as he stroked Shiro's gently sleeping face, her head in his lap.

Packing so much information into her little head, she must have been exhausted.

"If humans were all useless trash like me, we would have been lost in despair long ago."

His expression as he caressed his sister's cheek.

Compared to the man who was so full of frustration and hopelessness earlier—belonged to a completely different person.

"They definitely, exist."

The gentle brother half closed his eyes, as if staring at the light.

Full of admiration and aspiration.....for this pale girl, whose chest softly rose and fell.

"People's—the smallness that you felt, happens because of our foolishness, yet it is through that we learn, that we rise up to possibly reach even the gods; such wishes and dreams are what her small frame represents.....the hope of [genius]."

"....."

"Hey, I'm an idiot after all."

He laughed wryly.

"I'm good at observing my own kind. Really, the world is filled with them—enough to make me sick."

However.

"But.....Shiro is different."

As he stroked the face that lay on his knees.

"The day when I first met Shiro—eight years ago."

As if remembering what happened yesterday, Sora's eyes drifted away.

"She had been a child only three years old. But what do you think the first thing she said was, when she heard my name?"

".....Rea, lly.....how 'empty[11]'....."

—Not understanding, Jibril frowned.

Explaining, Sora chuckled.

"A three year old, already juggling multiple languages, saw me who was superficially laughing along with the crowd and hit me with that double meaning the first time we met—it really is laughable isn't it?"

His words contained neither self-depreciation nor anger.

Rather as if in a fever, Sora laughed fearlessly.

"[I was entranced]. The [geniuses] I had always been thrilled by, were real."

What his worthless imagination had cooked up had jumped out to be before his very eyes.

He asked himself, how can she do that.

And asked again, why can't I.

Completely different, seeing a completely different world; an overwhelming person.

"And as for me, who had become that [genius]'s 'brother'....."

He laughed bitterly again, yet there was resolve mixed in.

"Despite how apart we were, I longed. I decided to believe. Even one as useless as me, if I utterly worked my ass off, even if I couldn't follow her into that realm, then I could at least come close."

"That's why I don't believe in 'humanity'."

—As he doesn't believe in himself.

"That's why I believe in that 'possibility'."

—As he can believe in Shiro.

"Humanity's potential is infinite. It's just that that potential can go in either direction."

Therefore humans can be infinitely wise, or infinitely foolish—if that's so.

"If I'm infinitely foolish enough, then maybe I can one day catch up to my infinitely wise sister?"

—A perfect revolution.

Smiling so, Sora continued to tenderly nuzzle his little sister.

Kneeling seiza next to them, Jibril observed with great interest.

—He himself probably didn't notice.

Overlooked that at the time, he himself had only been 10 years old.

That at 10 years of age he had unraveled the essence of the words of that three year old child, and accepted them.

Even respected them.

And then thought of what to do about it.

He had realised that he couldn't win that way, and so set about carving his own path.

Something like that.....someone who can do that.....what would you call them?

He who called himself a fool—he himself, probably didn't realise.

"—I see, the [line between genius and stupidity is fine indeed]—those are profound words."

Jibril likewise looked overhead.

Gazing up at a sea of stars in the endless night sky beyond the skylight, Sora spoke.

"In our original world—humans have flown the sky, and crossed the stars."

"—Speaking freely.....I can't believe it."

"Exactly, no one could. Even humans themselves."

But there were those who believed, who dreamed.

Precisely because they were born without wings, they gazed up and longed for the heavens all the more.

At last, with their own hands, they soared up into beyond upon wings of iron.

Then they dreamed even higher, even further, until they reached the very stars themselves.

Because they are born with nothing, they could yearn—to aim at that which is 'far away'.

—If we don't have it, then we'll find it.

—If we can't find it, then we'll make it.

—If it still can't be obtained, then keep searching until the world's end.

[Being born with nothing].

Precisely because of that fact, they are the [proud weak], the proof of humans infinite possibilities.

"They're definitely there in humanity, [those who've found it]. Not one of the countless imitations like me, but an unrivaled genius."

Not trying to understand that, would be a sin.

Because the words of a genius are too obvious to themselves, such that they cannot explain it.

"So the duty of conveying that, falls to us common men."

"If you don't believe in the 'start' then there can be no 'beginning'. Same for the previous king."

Laughing so, Sora looked down at the map again.

Jibril simply closed her eyes.

She produced a magic light in her hand, and lit up Sora's surroundings.

"I believe in what master believes. If master will believe in Imanity, then I will simply follow you until the end. That is all."

Hiding outside the door, listening to that exchange, Steph's mind whirled.

Endlessly maligned as a king, yet her grandfather's back had been so big and warm.

Gentle and warm, the back of a man who ceaselessly believed in people.

—"When you meet the ones who you believe from your heart you can entrust Elchea to....."

Cold and calculating, a man who has always doubted people.

He was far different from her grandfather, but because of that.

He was someone who believed in the capability of people more than any other.

Would it be alright to entrust to him, this key her grandfather left her.

She herself did not know what it was for—but.

If it was him.....if it was Sora, would her grandfather be satisfied.

Would he praise her.....'you chose a good person'.

".....Sora"

Creaaak.....slowly pushing open the door, Steph saw Jibril faintly smiling and Sora looking surprised.

Steph simply—spoke with grim determination.

"There's something I want to pass on to you."

Part 6

The next day.....in the royal bedroom, now Steph's bedroom.

Four people: Steph, Sora, Shiro and Jibril were within.

"—Is the general gist of it."

Having spoken everything she remembered, Steph described the history of the key.

The first words that came in reply.

"—They're definitely ero books."

.....And so.

Steph intensely regretted her choice.

"T-there's no way that's the case! How the heck did you get that from my description!"

"But he was in such a hurry to shut your father up."

"He, he said that was something different!"

"In the [previous world] Shiro and I came from, ero books were something statistically 90% of men hid away."

".....80%, also hid.....ero, goods....."

"Yep. Well, this is an important key Steph. I had been worried there were no [side dishes] in this world."

With no words left to her, Steph fell backwards onto the bed in silence.

"But master, we don't know where the key goes yet....."

"Ero books are absolutely always hidden in the bedroom, in other words right here. Without a doubt."

"If it's a hidden room we've [found it already]. It's probably the one over there."

".....Huh——?"

At those words, Steph got up in a hurry and turned around.

Falling off the bed, Steph chased after Sora and the others.

"Firstly—the bed is tilted. Shiro fell off after all."

A few days ago Sora had indeed waken up inconsolable, Steph recalled.

"So if you push the bed and look closely, there really is an incline. Look at the decorative scales engraved on the plates at the foot of the bed. The scale is tilted to the left, meaning the left is heavier, meaning there's something on the left."

Indifferently.

With no catharsis whatsoever, Sora blandly revealed the mystery.

"Next, the bookshelf on the left. The intervals of the shelves are not uniform. Even though the shelves of the one on the right are."

"Eh, right.....th, that's certainly so."

"They're irregular, but by and large the pattern can be divided into large and small."

He pointed at the rows of shelves from the top.

"If you take this as 0, the result is 01, 00, 11, 10. Converting to binary that's 1, 0, 3, 2. In this room, well the only book with over 1000 pages is the encyclopedia."

Saying so, Sora took the encyclopedia from the shelf.

"Now the first word on page 1032 is, in the language of Imanity, [lighthouse]. Well~conventionally it'd probably be referring to a candelabra or chandelier, some sort of lighting fixture."

Sora walked over to some candles mounted on the wall.

"There's been an indent drawn through that word in the middle, as if with an uninked pen."

As he spoke both Jibril and Steph looked.

There was indeed a faint dent.

"So it's referring to the candles on the left side of the room, specifically the [middle] candles. Furthermore that word is connected by three arrows on the left which point to related entries. So—"

He tilted the candelabra three times to the left.

"Finally, one single arrow to the right points to [harbour] on page 605 as a related item. Basically—"

He then tilted the candelabra once to the right.

Once he did, the candelabra slid out.....

—Within were four dials.

"Shiro solved it from here, so I'll pass it on."

Tagging hands, Shiro turned the dials.

"......[lighthouse], [harbour]......Imanity, script.....factoring in.....number of line, intersections....."

Clicking sounds could be heard.

"......Perfectly.....four, digits.....answer, [2642]....."

As Steph and Jibril looked on stunned.

Sora, as if showing off rapid magic tricks, clapped his hands and rushed them to the next step.

"And with that behold, behind the curtain, one of the blocks of the wall somehow lifts out!.....and it's pretty heavy, so earlier it took both me and Shiro some considerable effort, but screw that now. Jibril, if you please."

"Ah, yes, as you will."

Jibril focused slightly.

"Once you do that, well, as we said—"

Rumble rumble rumble.

"The bookshelf moves~"

Behind that now displaced bookshelf was—

"Something that looks like a locked door. The key should be for that, right?"

Taking out the key he had obtained from Steph, Sora spoke leisurely.

——.....

Too leisurely.

Too leisurely, and too unceremoniously.

This must have been a mechanism the previous king had desperately planned out with all his cunning —

With even Jibril being taken aback at this carefreeness, Steph shouted out.

"J-ju, just when did you figure this out!!"

"Like I said, the day Shiro fell off the bed."

"……Nod nod"

—No wait.

Please wait, thought Steph.

"……Would that be the day you made me a dog, and challenged Jibril to a game?"

"Ah, you have a good memory."

"That's trauma I'll never be able to forget even if I wanted to! More importantly——!"

—Steph looked back on that day, from when Sora had awoken trembling.

Steph had lost at black jack.

They had then proceeded to decimate the nobles—then they had visited the libraries.

"Just when did you find the time to solve all this—!?"

"From when Steph called for the nobles, in that hour I guess?"

Without any fuss, they had solved it in such a trivial amount of time.

This mystery—that Steph had brooded over for so long.

As if it were just to pass the time.

Steph was stunned, but it was as if Sora wasn't even aware of their own achievement.

"Well, that being said we couldn't find the key, so this is as far as we got."

"B, but master, a door of that degree, even without a key—"

"Ah, yeah we could have picked it easily, but cheating in a puzzle game like this would be boring."

Sora laughed, and Shiro nodded.

Right, this is all, just a game to them……

Loosening up, Sora coughed.

"Now then—let us go worship the treasure books hidden within, ah, I'll blindfold Shiro first."

"......muu......no, fair....."

"Time is impartial. Please wait seven years."

"Haven't I been saying they're not ero books!?"

Sora turned the key he had gotten from Steph in the keyhole.

With the sound of refined fittings creaking, the door opened.

———.....

Even Sora who had been expecting ero books just a while ago.

Why could it be.

As one—they gasped.

All of them.

In there was a study, with no windows.

Alongside bookshelves crammed with books were sentimental accessories, tables and chairs, all covered in dust.

But contrary to the peacefulness, something unearthly could be felt.

A feeling that one should not enter here so carelessly, which would stop anyone's feet.

Sora cleared his throat, and slowly passed through the door.

And looked over the book placed in the centre of the desk that was still open.

He brushed a hand over the unreadably dusty pages.

Just one statement had been written there, in a strong hand.

"From the king of the last of Imanity—to the king who will bring us back, I leave this to you."

Sora painstakingly turned the page, and read what followed.

"I was not a 'wise king'."

"I could perhaps have been remembered as an extraordinary king. But for the sake of he who is not I, that will bring a resurgence, I willingly take this shame. With the hope that through the struggles I have encountered, I believe that the path of the next king will be cleared."

"....."

Sora stood silent, motionless, and both Shiro and Jibril who understood what all this meant were likewise.

—Here was a man who had forsaken glory.

In a lifetime, he had wagered countless games with other nations.

The Eastern Union alone had been challenged eight times.

A man who had challenged recklessly despite the losses, seeking to uncover and expose all their secrets.

—As it was, Imanity stood on the brink of destruction.

His own actions had hastened it.

Yet knowing that he had set out on a series of offensives, as if he were a fool.

Beginning from the Eastern Union, devoting himself to uncovering the stratagems of the enemy, he was despised and reviled.

This was the record of a man who understood all that—

It was true after all.

"The previous king.....had [not lost his memory]."

"No way, why!"

Even Jibril herself had not been able to avoid amnesia when facing the Eastern Union,

But Sora realized.

It was just a guess—but it was almost certainly the truth.

"Jibril.....a rich idiot comes into your casino. If you wanted all his money, [what would you do]?"

"—I'd tempt him with games he just might be able to win, however many times.....it.....took....."

Realising thus, Jibril's eyes widened.

"The previous king dove in. Eight times. Deliberately handing over the land—so that it may one day be won back."

But even if his memory wasn't erased, the Eastern Union must have sought to stop him from speaking out.

Therefore, most likely.

"The condition must have been 'you cannot tell anyone in your lifetime....."

Meaning—[after death] was not included.....

And so. With a body unable to use magic like the elves.

He was the only one who had grasped the contents of an unrecordable game.

"——[The next king, will be Imanity's strongest gambler].....was it."

".....Un."

Sora muttered the will of the late king, and Shiro also understood the intent.

He—probably had known.

He had made the gamble despite knowing that other countries would definitely send their own agents.

Even so—he had calculated that the one who would overcome all and be crowned, would be a 'person'.

Because of the interference of other countries, he could only pretend to be a loser and leave this record for those who would follow.

Having concluded that if he fought straight up he could not win, he instead kept this immaculate record.

".....Steph."

"W, what?"

Perhaps not understanding the situation, Steph was confused at Sora's serious tone.

"......Your grandfather.....no, the [late king].....was without a doubt [your grandfather]."

Sora recalled how Steph, in order to figure out their tricks, had bet even her panties.

He had been held in contempt by every other nation, and even his own people.

Yet he had continued to play the fool, and devoted himself to understanding.

Within his heart, he had prepared himself to the uttermost.

Without ever losing belief in the 'king who will bring us back'—was this faith in the human race?

He had been betting.

That from humans, the lowest of the low, would emerge one able to overwhelm all the others.

The possibility was almost zero, but he believed in the possibility that wasn't zero.

Fame, glory, praise.....a fulfilling life.

For the sake of final victory, he had lived a life of defeat and shame.

The siblings who had been entrusted as the 'king who will bring us back' simply stood.

Looking down at his shirt which read [I ♥ Humans], Sora spoke.

"Hey Jibril, for a guy like this to have existed—it's unbearable right?"

".....I, guess so."

She felt she could see a glimpse of what her master believed in.

Jibril, in order to change her perception, closed her eyes.

Sora took out his mobile, and opened the task scheduler.

He tapped his fingers.

Without a doubt, what he had written was:

"Objective- absolute conquest of the Eastern Union"

Chapter 4 - Checkmate/Checkmate

Part 1

Embassy——correction, originally the palace of Elchea.

Gazing onto the building, Shiro muttered out:

".....my neck hurts."

"Wow, never expected it to be this huge.....but I don't think humans are that advanced to build this yet right?"

Sora complained while holding onto his neck. Without any hint of interest, Jibril flatly replied:

"Of course, this is the result of constantly remodeling after the Eastern Union took it away."

"Hmm...." Sora replied.

".....Although I was sure of that.....I just wanted to see that glimpse of hope."

".Nuu...? What are you talking about?————————No, regarding something else."

Steph pointed onto the ground angrily and said:

"Could you enlighten me on why are we here?"

Jibril and Shiro who were also brought here without hearing an explanation looked towards Sora, reaffirming Steph's question.

"Well, I just wanted to see those cute [Werebeasts]."

Sora vaguely answered her question before swaggering forward, but was blocked off by Steph quickly.

"Oi, wait a minute, although we are in Elchea, this is still an embassy!!"

"I know I know, but this was originally my King city."

"Guuuuu, so, so————————thi, this is violation of the territorial rights!"

"Who is violating the territorial rights? I've already made an appointment in advance."

"Eh? That's im————"

Steph was about to retort, but got abruptly cut off by him.

"Isn't that right——gramps?"

Towards those words that Sora spouted.

The door to the huge embassy suddenly opened and a figure appeared.

"————Welcome, your highness the King and the Queen of Elchea."

White-haired yet old, with wolf ears and a coarse tail while wearing hakama pants——a Therianthrope, the elder walked down from the staircase and came to the same height as the four, before bowing down in respect.

"Nice to meet you, I'm in charge of foreign affairs here in Elchea for the Eastern Union——Hatsuse Ino"

With a respectful and polite attitude, the elder————Hatsuse Ino said.

"Eh? Strange? Ho, how did you get in touch with each other!?"

Although Sora didn't know why Steph was surprised, he replied nonetheless:

"Because earlier this morning, he spotted me on the library's balcony."

————Eh?

"I then used sign language to convey the message of [I'm going over now], and gramps agreed. So, I said I've made an appointment."

.....No no, that is very strange, Steph said.

"Wa, wait a moment, isn't this place 30 kilometers (18.6 miles) away from the library!?"

"Yes, I was quite shocked to learn that Therianthropes' eyesight are that good."

——Something is wrong.

It shouldn't be like this.

It's understandable that Therianthropes could do that, but the problem is——

How did Sora see him?

However, Ino paid no heed to that point and calmly made a deal with Sora.

"You are here to visit the Embassy of the Eastern Union in Elchea——for [Hatsuse Izuna] right."

Just like that, Ino preemptively told them of their purpose in visiting.

Ino slightly closed his eyes.

As a Therianthropes who could read people's heart, he foresaw it.

Steph instantly gasped.

Those pair of eyes——yes, was like Sora's, wait, even worse than Sora's.

It was as if those eyes could peek directly into someone's mind——

"Since you are informed already, then lead us there."

But facing against those eyes, Sora withstood his stare unfalteringly.

What did Ino see in Sora?

"——This way."

With that, he started to lead them in.

Part 2

After entering the building, they had to walk across the entrance hall and take the elevator.

In the lift where there were 80 buttons, the 60th button was pressed and the lift steadily climbed upwards.

"Hmm!? Wha, what is this? The floor is moving!?"

Ignoring the astonished Steph, Ino said:

"If possible, could you follow the regular procedures for your visit next time?"

What he implied was not to use that kind of method again.

Steph was particularly responsive to those words.

"How improper, the Eastern Union didn't even respond to formal procedures either!"

Hearing Steph mouthed off such ironic words, or maybe accidental, Ino peered into Steph's eyes and spoke:

"——What? You guys really sent out letters...."

Perhaps reading Steph's mind, Ino was surprised that she wasn't lying.

Steph couldn't help but cringed with those eyes that could read hearts, but she still bravely said:

"Of, of course! Starting from my grandfather's generation, no matter how much we wanted to bring on trade and diplomatic correspondence, you've never replied once, don't you dare say you weren't informed of this!"

".....My apologies, in the future please address the letters to Hatsuse Ino then."

Finishing his words, Ino pressed his hand on his forehead and sighed.

"As you know, after that incident, a lot of people held hostility to Elchea.....since the former King conducted that last game, I didn't know that there were letters....."

"Wha——!.....Liar——"

"I'm afraid someone else might've disposed it. This action is unacceptable, I'll definitely ferret out those responsible for these actions——and give them strict punishment, so please forgive me."

Steph had no choice but to quiet down when Ino interrupted her and explained.

His face was irritated and ashamed.

——It seems like he really didn't know.

"I'm speechless at the fact that you dare to call yourselves a big country. Forget it, in the end you are still Therianthropes."

Listening to the criticisms coming from the fearless Jibril, Ino stared at her with sharp eyes.

"About that, Steph, what was that?"

The letter wasn't received, so you thought that they didn't reply, Sora asked.

".....After the mansion was taken away, they started rebuilding it."

Steph sighed bitterly.

"If the Embassy was more spectacular than King City, it would affect the prestige of the country, so Elchea built a new castle."

"Oh, so that is the castle, right?"

"Towards our fortification, the Eastern Union was provoking us, large-scale construction everywhere.....Elchea couldn't even compare to the Eastern Union, so, that, in short, many things had happened."

"Ahhhh~ I hate dealing with this kind of troublesome thing."

Sora started whining, while Jibril was deliberately trying to pick at his words.

"Because the Therianthropes of the 14th held contempt over humans who were at 16th, things became much more complicated——There should be a sentence like this in one of Master's books right."

Recalling from the contents of the book, Jibril couldn't help but laughed out, before saying:

"It was called———[the pot calls the kettle black; one who retreats fifty packs mocks one who retreats a hundred]."

Ino sniggered after hearing that:

"Very appropriate, I absolutely agree, it really is a shame, coming from No.6th-sama."

However, Ino added on:

"Floating in the air, burying yourselves in a pile of antique books, it should've been forty packs though."

"Hehe, you may be old, but you are pretty honest."

This response came from Jibril, whose smile has not yet collapsed.

"Therianthropes' species, perfomance, knowledge, wisdom.....all are inferior to The Flügel, always below us, living a humble existence, to despise someone, you have to despise something first right?"

"Hahaha, as expected of a defective-sama who mixes around with bald monkeys, such unexpected words."

"That's right, as for the mongrels with those narrow eyes, my words must definitely be an eye-opener."

"Hahaha."

"Hehehe."

"....I say Steph."

"....I can probably figure out what you want to say, but go on."

"Isn't this world a tad bit tense? And the bald monkeys are referring to us right?"

"Battling for nearly eternity, but suddenly unable to fight, its normal for the hatred to linger...."

Moreover——

".....Regarding both of their strengths, they are one of the uppermost races in the [Sixteen races]."

As for the second question——Steph shook her head, this was a question that was brainless.

"Hehehe, immediately being so arrogant after getting restricted, how lively aren't you?"

"Hahaha, because we have no other ability except killing, we are different from some people who would only seclude themselves, hilarious."

Sora and Shiro thought of the same thing.

That was, this world really needed the restraint in power.

Part 3

Arriving at the sixtieth floor, they left the elevator filled with killing intent.

An exhausted Steph unhesitatingly sat down on a chair in a hall that seemed to be the reception area.

"Ho, how tiring."

Sora completely agreed to that, but he was busy glancing around his surroundings.

".....Then please excuse me while I go fetch Hatsuse Izuna."

Bowing graciously, Ino strolled out of the room. After watching him leave the room, Steph copied Sora and surveyed around the area.

"But.....Having said that, this is very luxurious, the civilization gap could really be felt."

The room was made entirely out of marble, a scarce resource in this world.

The leather sofa even had springs in it.

However, this wasn't what Sora was looking for.

"Master, how did you get in touch with the Therianthropes?"

".....Jibril, haven't you noticed that no one had mentioned this yet?"

"My sincere apologies, but I'm different from those mind-reading Therianthropes, I always feel concerned."

Sora instantly understood.

To Jibril, seeing the [Unknown] in front of her.

Was tantamount to a horse seeing a [Carrot] in front of it.

".....You see."

Placing his index finger on his lips, Sora retrieved something out——Mobile phone.

After looking through the optical zoom, coupled with a high resolution application, a photo was taken at the maximum zoom length.

Barely reflected on the screen was the silhouette of the old man.

——Which was to say, this was the case.

In actuality, Sora couldn't really see Ino at all.

It was a coincidence that the camera direction was facing to the figure that seemed to be looking at Sora. After deducing that he himself could be seen, Sora attempted sign language with the figure.

To be truthful——Sora was just bluffing.

Hmmmm, this is really interesting.....Jibril said so.

However——

(Since they are the mind-reading Therianthropes, wouldn't this bluff be useless?)

Even Master was clueless as to why the letters weren't sent——

While Jibril pondered about this question.

".....Nii, that."

"Yeah, I know."

New questions arose.

"......Master, you know what [that] is?"

What Jibril was pointing to was———a television.

Yes, this was what Sora was looking for.

Although the appearance was somewhat different than the TV that Sora knows, in the end it was inevitably a————Television.

"——un, the clear evidence has been found...."

"What clear evidence?"

Hearing that question, Sora smirked.

"I'll talk about it at night, those Therianthropes have good ears. In fact, they are probably listening already——Am I right? Old man."

"——Sorry for the wait."

Kacha, Ino opened the door and came in.

"This is the ambassador for the Eastern Union in Elchea——Hatsuse Izuna."

After the introduction, what walked into the door was——

Black eyes and a black bob hairstyle, with the long, large ears and tail of a fennec[12] and a big ribbon tied around the waist of her kimono——no matter how you looked at it, the little girl was probably of a single-digit age.

"How cu——"

Forgetting her behavior, Steph almost blurted out cute, but didn't get the chance to finish.

"King Crimson!"[13]

"Hehehe, cute kemonomimi girl, come and play with big brother, I promise big brother isn't suspicious at alll~."

"......Fluffy.....want to touch.....hehehehehehehehe....."

——When did they move?

Even with Jibril's eyesight, she still couldn't capture Sora and Shiro's movements.

Both of them were already accurately stroking the girl's head and tail.

Facing against those two, the Therianthropes girl——Izuna responded in a lovely voice:

"You bastards are touching me, des." [14]

.....————

"————Eh?"

"Cuteness.....minus fifty points..."

Expressing their surprise, the siblings immediately retreated.

"You bastards don't stop now, des."

"Guu.....what?"

"You bastards better continue doing that, des."

Like a cat, Izuna narrowed her eyes and stuck her head out.

"Guuu~ah~really?"

"Its because you bastards suddenly touch me, I was surprised, des. But I didn't say I hate it, des."

Her movements and facial expressions were contradicting, but Sora immediately understood.

"......ah, ending the sentence with [des], is to make it more polite?"

"....!? Is that so, des!?"

To be honest, this world treated him very well.

In other words, the approval to caress her has already been given by Izuna.

"...Please don't take it to heart, my granddaughter only came to Elchea a year ago, and isn't fluent with the human language——moreover...."

Ino's expression suddenly changed.

"Oi! You bastard bald monkeys, don't think you bastards can take advantage just because I'm being courteous. You bastards dare to touch my lovely granddaughter with your filthy hands, be careful for I'll accidentally kill you al——"

———He then smiled again to correct his etiquette.

"I hope everyone can practice self-restraint and refrain from doing these actions again."

Using cold and sharp eyes, Sora stared at him and said:

"————Old man, that isn't any human language, it's completely your influence."

"Un? I don't get what you said."

Hiding behind Sora's back, Shiro replied:

"....I hate this grandpa.....minus 1000 points."

Then Shiro proceeded to stroke an eager Izuna.

"....But Izuna.....is moeee[15].....plus 100 points."

Seeing how Shiro was stroking his granddaughter, Ino started to become irritated and quietly said:

"——Izuna, you can object if you hate it, it's alright!"

"It's okay, this is comfortable, continue, des."

"Ah, then I also want in."

Stroke stroke stroke

"Technique is good even though you are bald monkeys, des. You bastards continue, des."

Izuna was expressionless like a cat, yet she was pleading with her eyes closed. Sora then asked:

"Then could you stop calling us bald monkeys?"

"Why, des?"

"Because calling our names will make us happier. I'm Sora, she is my little sister Shiro, pleased to meet you."

".....Pleased to meet you."

"Understood, des. Pleased to meet you, Shiro, Sora."

Stroke stroke stroke

"——Izuna, you prohibit grandpa from touching, yet the bald monkeys can do it!"

"Grandpa's.....technique is bad, the claws hurt, des."

Hearing the nonchalant reply from Izuna, Ino was frustrated while Sora merely laughed aside and said:

"Kukuku.....regarding the virtual Nintendo pet game, and my mastery of H-game, this sort of stroking technique is simply too easy, don't you underestimate skilled gamers, old man."

"....Means..we haven't.....caress real animals yet."

"Please stop saying that, I'll become more empty!!"

Part 4

While Izuna was staring at the ceiling in a trance, Ino was nodding his head in agreement.

On the other side of the table, with Sora as the lead, they were sitting face to face.

"Then can the stupid monkeys explain why you are here today?"

"Since you can read minds, it ain't necessary right."

"This is a diplomatic meeting, a place where verbal and written agreements are exchanged, are you monkeys too stupid to understand that?"

".....Old man, you're being immature if you are angry just because your granddaughter prefers our treatment."

Just when a crack appeared on Ino's smile, Jibril sweetly smiled and said:

"Master, the Therianthropes have below aggregate scores for mentality, just like glass, they are fragile and prone to injury, please don't stab him in the heart okay? Otherwise it's just too pathetic."

Ino's smile was almost approaching it's limit.

Just when he was considering whether or not to break all restraints and kick those guys out, he stared into Sora's eyes.

——Instantly, Ino felt a chill run down his back.

In a moment the prankfulness and cynicism had disappeared without a trace.

What was there was an arrogant, rude, deceptive, yet doing numerous calculations in his head——[The King].

"My request is very simple——Hatsuse Ino."

Carrying an extremely confident smile, Sora said with a determined expression.

"In exchange for your granddaughter's panties, I'll give you Steph's."

"——What!?"

"Oi! Bastard monkey, isn't that a bit too much!?"

Steph who suddenly became the topic of question and Ino shouted out.

However, Sora had a surprised reaction.

"Eh? You are unhappy with Steph's? Is Jibril's one better?"

"If Master commands, I'll gladly oblige."

At the same time, Jibril started stripping off her panties.

As if enduring something, Ino pressed onto his forehead and squeezed out his voice:

"Oi, monkey, if you came here just to fool arou——"

"Nuu, Shiro's is a no-no, you are pretty sick if you wanted an 11-year-old girl's panties. Or unless ——yo, YOU WANT MINE!? Guuu, regarding that.....Even the tolerant me may be hesitant....."

Ino looked like he was about to explode, but Sora mercilessly continued:

"I say old man, can't it do? I'm allowing you to use Izuna's panties?"

"You bastard——Since you aren't talking about your true intentions, you better get——"

Perhaps suffering from a headache, Ino pressed unto his forehead.

——Sora revealed an exceptionally mocking smile, as if he was a gambler gambling for the win of his life.

"——Old man, sorry, but I've already seen through your fake ability to read minds, such a mistake."

Ino's body startled, it was a response that was extremely difficult to distinguish with the human eye, but to Sora, it was more than enough.

"Not going to talk about true intentions.....eh, although it looked like you could read my thoughts, but if you could really read minds, you should've agreed to a game with the panties as the bet. Because compared with the panties, the result of the win, that is——"

"I've already understood the Eastern Union's game, it's because you aren't that negligent to actually reveal the importance of [Memory elimination] right."

Sora grinned while exposing a meaningful smile.

"....."

Ino was expressionless.

Because——

When Sora said those words, his pupil, heartbeat, even the sound of his heartbeat, told him that everything the man in front of him said held his words in full belief.

"Well since it has been [Confirmed], I'll grant your wish and tell you about the true reason why we came here."

Lifting his feet up, Sora changed his posture.

"As the sixteenth sequenced race, the fully representative of the human race [Elchea], Shiro and Sora."

Holding onto Shiro's hand, the oath was recited while raised.

"Complimenting the fourteenth sequenced race of [Therianthropes] from the [Eastern Union], and for congratulating the country for accepting us on our route to [Conquer the world], and becoming the [Number one victim]. In this [Country gamble], my request for your country is——"

With hostility hidden in his smile, Sora announced:

"——[Everything in your continent]."

——Hearing that sentence, everyone was dumbfounded with the exception of Sora and Shiro.

Whether Ino, or the previously dazed Izuna, both of their faces became pale.

Because that request——went past the limit.

"Ah, for my side the bet would still be Steph's panties."

"Wh, what!?"

"It would be perfect if you agreed to Izuna's panties, but it's sad, old man."

Everything in the Eastern Union's continent——is betted with Steph's panties?

Even Jibril used a suspecting gaze to check if her master was talking right. Once again Sora opened his mouth.

Upholding his unwavering confidence, he said a sentence.

"Sorry, old man————It's [Check]."

No one understood the meaning behind that phrase.

At this time the bravest, or maybe the most curious, Jibril asked;

"Ma,master, can I ask what do you mean by that?"

"Eh? You still don't know?"

"......Ah....."

The previously lost in thought Shiro suddenly let out this sound.

"As expected of Shiro, you understand right? Yes——this way the [Eastern Union has no more moves]."

However, nobody comprehended the meaning behind that sentence except for the duo.

Sora could only lazily reply:

"Well, I'll explain to everyone and to the self-proclaiming mind reading old man."

"Half a century ago, the Eastern Union underwent rapid development in it's technical aspect.....but rapid development has it's difficulties."

Walking towards the sofa——Sora sat on the sofa full of elasticity.

"The television in this room as well as the elevator from before, sofa, all these modern technologies require resources from the mainland to be built. Meaning, the mainland's resources are the lifeblood to your modern technology. But the Eastern Union thrived in islands, and there was an obvious need to obtain resources from the mainland——However, [Before that], Elven Gard went on the offensive."

"What a pain——[Aside from luring the enemy to attack us, we had no other tricks]. But if we won against the world's largest country, then no one else would come again to challenge a game whose details are unknown. But then you still couldn't lose to the opposition——And why is that so?"

Raising a finger while smiling, Sora said:

"Come, we'll use a sequence to solve the mystery. [Question 1] Why eliminate the memory of the game?"

Shiro answered this question.

".....Because if they didn't eliminate.....can't win again."

——Why would the Eastern Union include an [offensive strategy to lure the enemy] if there are contradictory demands?

They had a need to do that, even if the conditions made them bear any disadvantages.

If they deliberately lost to Elven Gard, then the contents of the game would be exposed——thus losing the advantage to win.

"However, there will be loopholes even if you do that."

Eliminating the memories about the game.

Indeed that would prevent any strong measures the person could take——or so it seems.

"Even if the memory was eliminated——in the end the [outcome] of the game would always be revealed."

Hearing these words, Jibril suddenly woke up, but maintaining the consistent expressionless face was Ino.

"Okay, followed by [Question 2], why did Elven Gard challenge 4 times?"

".....Because.....Using the loss..... try to crack the game.....?"

Yes——Elven Gard and Elchea were different, they were a big country.

[Probing] while being conscious of the losses they had, was an easy task.

"After losing once, Elven Gard speculated that it was a [Game that required no use of magic], because when it comes to the reason why the Elves would lose, the first suspicion would be this."

Putting up his finger, Sora continued onwards.

"Because their memory was eliminated, they couldn't understand the contents of the game, but they speculated that it was a game that possibly made magic ineffective. As for their second try, they linked arms with outsiders to use magic externally, but even so they still lost; by the third time, they used some other way to identify the contents of the game."

Really, for the government to use magic, it really makes one envy, Sora couldn't help but said so.

"With that, they went all out and challenged for the fourth time——but still lost. Am I right? Old man."

".....You really do have a great imagination."

It was a speculation from Sora, Ino based on this to respond in this way.

But thinking that one could bluff Sora——was the biggest mistake.

From his expression, Sora saw it shook slightly, he then smiled and put up two fingers.

"But this generated two questions, the first is, why did Elven Gard lose? Then, more importantly——why weren't they on the offensive again?"

——Yes, the question wasn't why they challenged before.

But why did they stop challenging.

In this game where losing was the only information revealed, people couldn't just ignore this.

"There are two possibilities, they understood that the principles of the game was made to make them lose."

Then Sora bent a finger.

"Or——they knew what that game was, but still didn't understand why they lost the game."

Laughing, Sora wore a confident smile and said:

"——But, if it was the former, they would have won if they exposed the game. Which means, the [latter] is the correct answer."

Jibril——The Heavenly Winged from the sixth sequence, felt a chill down her spine.

The intelligence that Jibril was familiar with explained Sora's reasoning.

This was an extremely superb-like reasoning ability——

"But this was very weird, knowing the game, yet couldn't comprehend why they lost the game."

How weird~ this is strange, Sora recited out before laughing and continued his explanation:

"Unraveling the mystery that requires an incredible key——you gave it to me just now, old man."

Smiling ironically, Sora peered into Ino's eyes.

Watching the Therianthropes that claimed to read minds, Sora said:

"[Question 3]——why lie about being able to read minds?"

"....Because they can't read it...."

With an almost instantaneous answer from Shiro, Sora nodded his head.

"What the lie represented, it would be very distressing if known right?"

"Okay, the answer is almost out? [Question 4] what is winnable, yet still isn't winnable?"

With an elated expression, Sora.

"——come, I'll give everyone a hint!"

As if enjoying a guessing game, he deliberately acted and said:

"The Heavenly Winged, Elves, Mankind, to win against all these races with different characteristics, only using it defensively, only works when using memory elimination, doesn't require mind reading, a game belonging to a race that is technically advanced. WHAT GAME IS IT!?"

Stealing a peak at the television, Shiro answered:

".....A game that can easily cheat.....[Computer game]...."

Jibril and Steph didn't seem to understand this.

It's no wonder, because in this world, video games probably only existed in the Eastern Union.

For this reason——they needed to eliminate the memory to conceal it.

Because of this, the game couldn't be won.

——As long as they became the host, holding an electronic game...

Even if outside help was present, anything could be done, and even so the risk of being discovered of cheating——

——Was zero.

"To play this game, even magic is meaningless.....Aiya, as expected of a technologically advanced country, amazing right?"

Sora said, his tone wasn't mockery, but a sincere feeling of appreciation.

"The reason why you boasted out that you could read minds, was to give the defeated a residual doubt ——[Why did we lose against you?] an answer. Not letting the defeated an avenue to pursue.

Actually, you can only see through lies, but——not read them."

Indeed——it was exactly similar to Sora's pride in his skills.

Sora used facial expressions, posture and sound to see past lies.

While they used their superior senses to detect heartbeat and bloodflow.

This was the same theory as a master fraud claiming to be a psychic.

"....."

——On the dot.

The speculation wasn't wrong, Ino was speechless.

However, he didn't show any expression, only eroded by doubt.

Initially Sora——before he was aware that Ino couldn't read minds.

Which was at the time when Sora was clamoring about those nonsensical remarks about Izuna's panties.

Sora [was without any anxiety].

This implied that from the start he excluded the risk of being mind-read.

But as if in response with Ino's thoughts, Sora——yes, like a mind reader replied:

"Don't you think it is incredible old man, from the start I didn't sound like I was bluffing."

His own guilty conscience was hidden deceptively?

At that time when Ino was thinking about it, Sora continued with a tinge of mockery:

"Yes, that fact that you can't read minds——I already knew from the start. Why so?"

Okay, time for the last question——Sora said.

"[Question 5] Why did they lose the game 8 times?"

The answer to this question was already known to Shiro, Steph and Jibril, therefore——

"This question——old man, I'll hand it to you, you should know right."

"————.....!"

————unless the late king, he...?

The late king was the only one whose memory wasn't eliminated, while partaking in the Eastern Union's game, they had won territory from the mainland.

But, we agreed that the condition was that he does not inform anyone. Why——

——No, not right.

The problem isn't there, it is——!

Still in the midst of thinking, Sora interrupted with a proud smile on his face:

"Yes, you should understand right. From what the late king could tell us, it proves that you couldn't see through the late king's intent——you couldn't read his mind."

The late king's intent was——

"——The late king that signed the contract of [not telling it to anyone in this lifetime]——doesn't include death."

If this was true——

It explained how this man got the details of the game.

If he leaked the matter out, the Eastern Union would——

"Well, you should understand the situation right, old man."

Sora pretentiously continued with a malicious smile on his face:

"What a headache. Whatever you do requires you to remove my memory, but if you bet on your continental territory with Steph's panties and played the game with such a bet, then you must admit I was right."

Yes——then.

Just when Ino was about to make a decision, at the same time——

"Or placing everything I said as a speculation——meaning not agreeing on it, but [escaping]."

However, like a prey cornered by hunters, Sora broke Ino's thoughts and grimly said:

——"You think I would let you escape?"——

"We bet on Humanity's everything——[The chess]."

When Sora said these words.

A faint glow of light appeared in front of Sora's eyes——a piece.

Yes, that was....in this world where even the throne of god was determined through games.

In order to challenge god——the sixteen chess pieces must be collected, which means conquering all sixteen races——[Humanity's piece].

Humanity's piece————was a [king].

——Nobody present has seen it before.

Even Jibril who lived for 6000 years, this was the first time she saw a [piece].

Of course.

Because gambling a game with a [piece], was unheard of after the [Ten Oaths].

——Not even once was it seen.

For it was the bet to power.

In the case of losing, it means surrendering forever.

And that is the same as————demise.

"——You, are you serious—guuu!?"

Steph understood the seriousness of the situation.

She was about to yell: Are you serious, but was immediately pinned down by Jibril, with a hand covering her mouth.

——The way it has become, it was a bet for everything, all territory in the continent.

"So now if you escape, it's basically announcing to the world that I was correct."

Saying with a smile, without any fear, Sora watched the self-proclaimed mind reader——Ino's eyes.

"Okay, it's check aga....no, this would be [Checkmate]."

Sora boldly said.

"——Did you read past this move? Old man."

Peering at the grinning Sora, Ino shed cold sweat.

——How did this happen?

With the last remaining city, betting with a [piece], the inferior race that was about to lose everything.

Trying to achieve dominance against the Eastern Union that won every game so far.

Coupled with logical reasoning that forced him into a corner. This situation——how did it happen.

But——Ino.

He tried to keep his facade——no, he faked out a calm appearance to reply:

"I can only say that your imagination is great, your highness, are you sure you are not being negligent of one thing?"

Even with inner anxiety, Ino's will was still unshakable, and he sustained the fight.

"If your fantasy is true, doesn't it mean that——[Elven Gard knowing the circumstances still lost]?"

——Indeed, the Eastern Union must be forced to accept this challenge.

However, if it was what Sora had speculated.

The Eastern Union must use that game to fight.

And like the past, add another record to the win——However.

Sora, with a wry smile, replied:

"Old man, how did I communicate with you when I was at the library——if you really could read the mind, you shouldn't have pretended to understand everything, but frankly be surprised."

Staring into Ino's eyes, Sora revealed a splenetic smile and revealed his trump card.

"Because we——are not humans from this world."

——In the [World of the past].

They were undefeated in over two hundred and eighty kinds of game, and were even known as urban legends.

In the countless rumors, there was this such recount——that Ino didn't understand.

——Even with hacks and cheats, overcoming them was impossible.

"....."

On reflex, Ino wanted to conclude that he was lying.

However, whatever Sora did, was not shown to have a lie.

If what he said was a [lie], then this man, at any circumstances could fake a lie perfectly.

If what he said was the [truth], then it exposed the fact that he couldn't read his mind.

"......!"

Either way——Ino couldn't answer.

Sora's smile seems to imply: That's right, it's fine that way.

"When I came here, you thought I was as stupid as the late king right?"

But——

"....Sorry to disappoint you, but this time you're about to get eaten——Therianthropes."

Listening to the heartbeat of this Human King, aside from the [truth], any reaction wasn't felt, causing Ino to gasp.

"Okay."

——Sora stood up, quickly followed by the others.

"Just like that, but this requires the entire territory as a bet, I don't think it is something you can decide on your own, so you can confirm with your country and notify me the date of the bet."

Ah, also——Sora added on.

"I don't need to say, but for the game of betting the [piece], the whole of Imanity has the rights to spectate, so you'll need to prepare the premises and equipment. And also we are fighting as four, you have no rights to refuse, so I guess this is bye?"

After Sora said these comfortably, he waved at Izuna who was sitting across him.

"Bye, Izuna, we should play games the next time okay——?"

"...Although I don't know, des. But——"

However, her familiarity like before was gone.

"Sora and Shiro——came to find Izuna... for a fight, des?"

Hidden in her eyes were burdened with some responsibility as she looked at the [enemy].

Charged with the responsibility of being a guardian of something——those eyes that were in a state of readiness.

"Fight? No such thing, only a game."

Hearing Sora said that, Izuna used sharp eyes to glare at him.

"Then you are enemy, des."

Eyes filled with [Hostility], the petite girl growled while saying so.

"....I won't lose to you, des."

However, in contrast, Sora gazed at her with [kind] eyes.

"Sorry, but Izuna will lose, there is no doubt about that. 『Kuuhaku』 accepts no defeats."

"....Baibai.....Izuna-chan, see you later...."

The siblings left and waved, while Jibril carried Steph who was unrelentingly resisting and chased after them.

Looking at the figure of those four that left.

They unhesitatingly operated the elevator buttons, and with that the door gradually closed.

Hatsuse Ino and Hatsuse Izuna could only watch them leave.

Part 5

"Lo, lo, look what you've just doneee
ahhhh

Sora laughed innocently, while Shiro who was sitting on his lap nods her head and smiled.

Seeing their reactions, Steph felt her back shudder.

————————————Mad.

To describe these siblings, euphemistic words like [abnormal] and [aberration] shouldn't be used.

Indeed, the real meaning, is that they are literally——mad.

"Wha, what are you guys treating human lives as."

Facing up against their sanity, Steph felt terror rather than contempt, she wanted to run, but she stood her ground and started complaining:

"I despise you.....I thought you were doing those ridiculous actions for humanity. I was wrong for thinking that——!"

Steph scolded them, this scenario has happened for quite some time already.

But this time, there was a clear difference as her eyes held genuine contempt and disappointment.

——Sora still nonchalantly answered:

"Calm down, Steph.....this is only a game?"

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米頁

——Just this sentence, all doubts to Steph turned into belief.

Believing in this man——was a grave mistake.

This man, no, this pair of siblings were only playing.

In actuality, they had never placed Humanity or the Eastern Union in their eyes.

They only think that this world itself is a game——!!!

(——Handing over grandfather's greatest achievement to these kind of people was a mistake—)

Despair, disappointment, fear——countless of emotions flooded Steph's heart.

However Jibril only held admiration for Shiro and Sora.

"As expected of my master and monarch....——"

——For victory, even the lives of the civilians could be placed on the tables.

Without any plans or strategies, but to assure a [win].

Steph feared the [Unknown].

However, for the same [Unknown], Jibril was full of envy, interest and yearning.

"You, what are you saying! This is completely irresponsible——"

"Then Dora-chan, let me ask you."

Rarely seeing Jibril display such seriousness in her eyes, Steph flinched.

"You said how were they going to be responsible if they lose. But conversely, if they win, everyone in the Therianthropes would lose their jobs, land, property, denied of their rights, even die. You want master to be in charge of that responsibility? Or is that the responsibility of the losers?"

"——Th, that...."

....She couldn't rebuke.

However, even so——Sora's action was too irresponsible.

At least. At least think of seeking the consent of the people right?

Jibril continued speaking.

"Even if war is prohibited, the world would still continue and people would still die."

————The world that prohibits usage of force.

Conversely, there is only that.

"As long as indirect ways are used like plunder and domination, murdering was still possible."

This was the [Ten Oaths], and——

This was how the humans have been treated up to now.

"Dora-chan doesn't want the bet to happen, and allow humanity to end?"

"No, no....Not like that——! But!"

Doing that kind of thing isn't responsible at all.

That kind of thing, is too strange——Steph said so, but——

"The so-called authoritarian figures exist because of that."

Jibril herself was one of the authoritarian figures.

Using cold and emotionless eyes to gaze at Steph, she categorically said:

"Whether in reality or in game, eventually it would still be [Mutual killing]——what responsibility is in there?"

——Facing those words that was spoken out by someone who experienced the war, Steph was speechless.

But, unexpectedly——[Sora] let out an uncertain voice.

"Hm? No, nobody will die, I said that this was only a game right?"

"——Eh?"

"What?"

"Ah?"

".....Un....?"

Those words didn't seem right.

At the moment when everyone widened their eyes in surprise.

Suddenly, as if having an understanding, Sora said out:

"Ah.....okay okay, I understand, so it's about that eh."

Always feeling that something was wrong, Sora finally found the reason.

"I always found it weird that even though this world is decided by games, there was still a sense of tension. It appears that you all——have the same ideals as the people in our world.....really surprising."

"......Ahh."

Similarly, Shiro appeared to have noticed and nodded.

"I see, no wonder nobody has appeared to solve the game of this [World]——no wonder God called us here."

Perhaps he had figured out the problem and solved it.

Returning his gaze back to his game console, Sora replied ambiguously:

"Rest assured, we will follow our declaration and conquer this world, conquer everything and leave nothing behind."

Then, Sora suddenly thought of something.

"Oh yah, and Steph."

"Eh....what?"

"You asked me what happens if I lose, so I will tell you seriously."

The pleasant smile from before was gone.

With a serious expression, he stared into Steph's eyes and said:

"——We won't lose, didn't we say it was [Checkmate]?"

With assurance, Sora said.

"The game with Eastern Union is already over, they can't win against us."

——However, because his target was too over the top, Steph couldn't believe him.

"......Correct, we still need one more puzzle, soon——the puzzle will come soon enough."

We'll play some games while waiting until then.

Finishing with those words, Sora resumed the game.

——Only the sister could understand him.

Countless tips were left behind.

And the two who couldn't obtain an answer from those tips.

Jibril and Steph could only——look at each other.

Epilogue - Fake End

Part 1

.....A week has passed——since the declaration of war on the Eastern Union.

The news that Sora had bet [Imanity's piece] spread quickly.

During the selection of the Kings, Sora single-handedly defeated the spy from the Elves.

From there onwards, the suspicion that [Sora was another country's spy] gradually rose after he defeated the Flügel.

Coupled with some nobles that harbored resentment against Sora, demonstrations took place.

The King City of Elchea was surrounded by a human wall, with the people haranguing non-stop at Sora.

——Just like that, Steph dragged her tired feet into the throne hall, before saying:

"Sora....I'm unable to suppress them anymore."

Even the ministers suspected Sora.

Thus, even they partook in the demonstrations against Sora.

"The nobles that followed us can't support us anymore because of this incident.....Even the ministers are holding a joint boycott, Elchea is pretty much in anarchy right now...."

Steph also held distrust to Sora.

Even so, Steph was trying hard to dispel the animosity of the people.

Perhaps feeling that it was useless, Steph slumped onto the ground.

"You've worked hard, Steph. Everything will be solved once the game with the Eastern Union is over."

Sora nonchalantly sat on the throne while playing games with Shiro.

He encouraged Steph while saying with a wry smile:

"We are spies from another country? It's too late, they should have doubted us once we defeated the

Elven spy."

——like this.

Steph still held distrust to Sora, who mocked the civilians' attempt.

"……What are you going to do? The demonstrations have already occurred."

"Nothing, just let them do what they want."

In this world, demonstrations were meaningless.

If someone was unsatisfied with Sora——they could challenge him and take over his authority——but, no one dared to challenge.

Which was to say, they couldn't do anything.

"…..Then can I ask, what was Sora doing for the past week?"

This sentence was half-ironic, half truly needing an explanation.

The answer was very simple.

"I am waiting."

——that was it.

"…..You are waiting for the reply from the Eastern Union regarding your challenge right?"

"Un~ No, that would be troublesome, I hope they can wait a bit longer more."

After replying with such an incomprehensible answer, Sora continued:

"Before that, I wish for a [puzzle] to come——it's too long to explain….."

As such, Sora didn't know whom he was complaining to.

——suddenly, Jibril who was beside him had a reaction.

"——Master, this is...."

But before Jibril could finish her sentence, Sora interrupted her and said:

"I know, you finally came, don't let me wait for too long okay?"

——everyone directed their eyesight to what Sora was talking to.

However, there was no one present in his line of sight.

Jibril probably felt the presence.

But, Steph couldn't see——even Shiro too, so they had to watch as Sora spoke.

"Yes, I know your intentions, of course, anytime is possible."

——Sora said while gently lifting Shiro up and placing her on the ground to stand.

He then stood up and surveyed around.

.....Shiro, Steph, Jibril, and.....

Sora boldly stared at [That] which only he could see.

Taking a deep breath, Sora faced Shiro and said:

"Shiro, listen carefully."

"....Un?"

"I believe in you."

"....Shiro believes too."

An immediate answer from Shiro, Sora couldn't help but respond with a smile.

"Shiro, we are indispensable."

"Shiro, we are bound together with a promise."

"Shiro, we are not the lead characters in a shounen manga."

"Shiro, we always win before the game starts."

Sora said all these sentences in flat succession.

It felt as if——

"......Nii....?"

A bad feeling had emerged.

Shiro uneasily called out to her brother.

And as if responding to her calls, Sora smiled and stroked his sister's head before saying:

"——We'll go and get the last piece of the puzzle required to swallow Eastern Union."

Then——

Sora laughed and said to that:

"——okay, shall we start the game?"

....——

.....————————————

Part 2

Sunlight from the windows shined onto her eyes.

".....Un....Guuu....."

But she refused to wake up, her consciousness still wanting to drift back to sleep.

Feeling loyal to her desires, Shiro turned her body, intending to sleep again.

As usual, she grabbed onto her brother's arm, and once again drift——

Her hands didn't catch what was supposed to be her brother's arm, only air.

"...Guu....?"

Again——fallen off the bed?

However, with her half-awake mind, she remembered that she was sleeping on the bedroom of the King.

In order to confirm the presence of her brother, she reluctantly opened her sleepy eyes——

The person that was supposed to be there had——

————.....

The capital of Elchea——Elchea.

This was the last bastion of the human species, after a countless number of defeats trying to obtain land.

In the castle of the King City, a young girl walked down the promenade.

Stephanie Dora.

Granddaughter of the late king, a highborn girl with red-hair and blue eyes.

——having said so.

She had dark circles under her eyes and her heavy footsteps showed how exhausted she was.

She staggered towards the [King]'s bedroom while holding poker cards and having a strange smile. Almost as if she was a ghost.

"Heh, hehehehe.....today is the day."

After a whole night, her consciousness was about to get cut off.

Stephanie——known as Steph, leaked out a dangerous smile.

"——Shiro, are you awake! It's morning already!"

Kok kok, kok kok.

Steph had poker cards in her hands, so she had to knock on the door with her feet.

But.....

The door probably wasn't even closed at all.

Because when she knocked on the door, it naturally opened——

"Eh? Weird....unless she's awake already....?"

Steph peeped into the King's bedroom.

What was there——

"Nii....Nii, where are you....Shiro's fault.....Shiro won't ever....fall off bed.....so come back....guuuu....."

Holding her knees and trembling non-stop, while tears flowed out was Shiro.

"——Hey...eh? Wha, what happened Shiro!?"

Steph was ranting just now.

After looking at her acting weirdly, she hurriedly placed the cards on the floor and ran to Shiro.

"Wh, what happened? Do you feel uncomfortable?"

Shiro however was unable to hear Steph's voice.

She was crying while exclaiming out:

"Nii.....Nii....Come out.....Don't leave Shiro alone...."

Hearing her cry so hard, Steph who seemed very worried asked:

"Th, that.....who is the brother you speak off? I'll, I'll bring the person out okay?"

———

Shiro finally heard Steph's voice.

What was Steph talking about?

There was only one brother that Shiro had.

She took out her phone and opened the contact book, but——

"....Lies....."

——How could this be possible?

There was only one contact number in her phone; her brother in which case.

But.

Why——

Why did her phone show——[0 contacts].

"....Impossible.....Lies.....Lies, lies....."

Shiro started to pale, her white skin losing even more colour.

Steph felt something was unusual, and desperately called out to her.

"Shiro, Shiro! Hey, are you alright!? What's wrong!!"

However, she was already unable to see Steph's existence.

Shiro suddenly opened the messages, mailbox address and image data folder of her phone, but.....none.

——there was no trace of her brother.

".....Lies.....this is.....absolutely a lie.."

Shiro confirmed the date of her phone.

——21st.

The game they played for the throne was——19th.

Shiro instantly confirmed the date by recalling all the images stored in her mind. Without a doubt, the

handheld game consoles, tablet, and phone all pointed to 19th.

Then on the 20th.

——what was she doing yesterday?

——.....None.

Her memories——were blank.

Shiro's memories could recall the contents of a book read five years ago.

This was as if——she slept for an entire day.

——Her brother isn't around.

There were no contacts in her phone.

There were also no historical traces from the mails.

——This proved that there was no evidence about her brother's existence

Shiro categorised all her findings

And narrowed it down to three possibilities.

Possibility number 1: Some sort of power erased her brother's [Existence] from this world.

Possibility number 2: She was becoming [crazy].

Possibility number 3: Or perhaps she was crazy in the first place——[But now she's back to normal].

However, regardless of which of the possibilities are correct.

To Shiro, that was not enough for her to withstand the outcome of the answers.

With her trembling voice, she squeezed out her voice.

——because she expected to hear the answer, she didn't want to hear at all.

But she relied on her last hope, and asked Steph——mentioning his name this time.

".....Steph....Nii.....Where.....Is.....[Sora]....?"

However, the response to her question.

Was just as expected.

——The response she didn't want to hear.

"....Sora? Is that a name? Who is it?"

——Ahh.

——she hoped.

This is a nightmare.

If she woke up, her brother would still be sleeping beside her.

Then she would say——[Good morning].

Shiro prayed for this desire, her eyes gradually turned dark

——Shiro, fainted.

Afterword

Hello everyone, it's been a while. I am author and illustrator Kamiya Yuu.

——Hi, finally the second volume is published. I'm glad it's gone through.

I've been responsible for several mangas and illustration work in the past that were sold in stores. But as a light novel writer, I'm totally new. Therefore, when I submitted the manuscript for this, I was sooooo scared that my stomach started to hurt, and I wanted to hide myself in a hole and escape from reality.

When the editor called and brought me back to life, my book was already published!

Thanks to that, I've successfully ignored the stress and pressure.

"That...even if it's a lie, but to say that you are escaping from reality just from the second volume."

Ahh! Isn't this S-editor who is in charge of me!

"Eh? Did I not tell you the deadline for the promotional materials?"

Weren't you the one who told me to do that on the eve of the deadline, it's the second volume and you're already becoming a Super S, S-editor-san.

Ahh~ Really, what do you want with me this time——

"Nothing, it's just that your illustrations for this book are not too good."

....Sorry.

"Oh yeah Kamiya-sensei. Could you not finish the originals for volume two, then say you want to [Completely rewrite] it?"

....Sor, ry.

"And don't think just because you go from Japan and Brazil, you can seriously probe about the affairs between both countries, say [Ah, forget it], and then nonchalantly emend the originals that you've already sent....."

....Sorry, I shouldn't have been born....

Guuuu, that, let's cheer up!

This volume in fact was originally to be volume 1.

The first volume was to be in the [Chapter 1], then this volume would be [Chapter 2], then the third volume to be [Chapter 3]——

I don't know why, but I've received a letter telling me not to rush things.

"....You were intending to publish a nine hundred paged book?"

Th, that...I don't know how much text is in a novel, or maybe I don't actually know how to allocate it.

In, in any case, next volume, Sora needs to use the most [Despicable move] in order to conquer the world.

This volume was just as Sora said, a [Checkmate].

So whether you are reading from the afterword, or readers who have finished the book, you should try to predict what Sora thinks——ah, but I'll be depressed if you could, so please don't guess it...Speculating is better.....

....Okay, because there is space here, I'd like to introduce some things that weren't mentioned.

Because this is [Materialising Word connector].
.....

"....Okay, then I'll chose a simple one——[Meat],"

Then Sora's words materialised.

....But....Eh?

"Why——I said [Meat], but why did a sexy blond girl appear!?"

In contrast to Jibril's radiant smile, Shiro had cold eyes.

"....Nii, impression...."

"Ah, ahhh....Sorry, I think it got affected by my impression?"

.....

——it was supposed to have such a paragraph.

"That.....wouldn't that be quite bad....."

Yes, yes, if it was [Materialising creations], then if a [Spatial bomb] was said, the universe would be in trouble, so I had to scrub that idea off. Ah, but it ends with [ん][16].

"No, it's not that kind of method."

And when Sora had an impression of [Eating meat], then——but can this be used?

"No? (Smiles)"

Anyway, half of this content was penned in Brazil.

I did write in volume 1 that because of an illness I had to go back to Brazil for several years.

Therefore, in order to grasp it in Brazil, and to make sure I don't have any inconvenience, I'm living in a rental apartment.

——Conclusion: No, it is impossible to work in Brazil.

"....Eh? Isn't that your home country? What is the problem——?

The problem is huge! Every time a soccer match starts, the whole city shakes!!

"...Something like an earthquake?"

The cheers and fireworks, and whenever there is a goal, residents will start yelling!

"....As expected of Brazil eh....."

In fact, I like football!

But that kind of yelling regardless of time, breaks my concentration and more importantly, I can't sleep!!

Dad! The deadline is approaching, please don't grab my hand every time there is a goal——

"Anyways, Kamiya-sensei, the limit is approaching."

.....Eh? No, that... was the illustration bad——

"I believe that you'll find a way?"

(Note: 2 pages of illustration panel not translated here)

This, how do you feel about this?

".....? Why such a frightened look?"

Th,that's, because I didn't have enough time....soo...

This——wasn't drawn by me.

"——What?"

Gu, that, only the frame was by me, the illustration....was drawn....by my wife.

"....."

I'm guessing that you'll say I have too much freedom!

But you silently put pressure on me, and it was editor-san who wanted me to add the afterword illustrations!?

Because my wife.....she used the pseudonym [Hiiragi Marushi] to be an illustrator.

Soooooo, forgive——un?

Editor-sama, why are you looking at me like that?

"Kamiya-sensei, I'm looking forward to seeing your wife becoming your illustrator?"

Are you a devil!!

All in all, for the final analysis!

I said that the manga would be suspended cause of my illness right!?

"No no, it would be too much burden on Kamiya-sensei alone, but in that case——"

No, that, I'll declare it, I originally thought that writing light novels would bring less burden. I can proofread and slowly illustrate, but to think that exceeding deadlines means going through hell——

"But didn't you make it? (Smiles)"

Ahh, I have to catch a flight, It's time to escape——noo, erm excuse me!

"Oh, Kamiya-sensei, where are you going?"

He stopped me!

Gu, that, readers. Thank you for all your support.

This was quite rushed compared to last episode, but if it brought you a little fun, I'm happy!

Then I'll escape first. See you next volume!

"Kamiya-sensei~! Your address, phone and image are in my hands————hehehehehe....."

References

1. ↑ Jamais vu (French- "never seen"), is often described as the opposite of déjà vu (French- already seen). Jamais vu involves a sense of eeriness and the observer's impression of seeing the situation for the first time, despite rationally knowing that he or she has been in the situation before. Link
2. ↑ Someone with a fulfilling 3D life.
3. ↑ GG, in a gaming sense, stands for "Good Game". Usually said at the end of a game, but is sometimes said before the end by an overconfident player.
4. ↑ Arcadia is one of the regional units of Greece. It takes its name from the son of Callisto and Zeus, Arcas. In Greek mythology, it was the home of Pan, the god of the wild. In European Renaissance arts, Arcadia was celebrated as an unspoiled, harmonious wilderness. Basically, it could be called a paradise or Eden.[1]
5. ↑ Kemonomimi literally means "animal ears". However, this word is used to refer to animal girls such as cat girls, dog girls, etc. Any animal that has ears. Strictly speaking, however, kemonomimi are different from animal and monster girls in that they are always mostly human, usually sporting only animal ears and a tail. They may or may not have horns.
6. ↑ Nopan, or without her panties on.
7. ↑ Caps for english
8. ↑ Kansai dialect for right
9. ↑ Nimotsu also means cumbersome
10. ↑ In the game of [The Call of Cthulhu], SAN represents the sanity of the player, once it reaches 0 they will go mad.
11. ↑ Sora (空) means 'empty'.
12. ↑ Vulpes zerda, a fox species indigenous to the Sahara and northern Africa, known for its large ears
13. ↑ Refers to King Crimson, the stand of a JoJo's Bizarre Adventure character named Diavolo, known for the ability to move extremely quickly and to "erase" time (freeze time for all but Diavolo and his stand).
14. ↑ Desu
15. ↑ A Japanese slang term used by Otakus to describe an ideal young girl.
16. ↑ Generally Japanese word connector lose when there is a ん consonant, and [bomb] in this case ends with ん

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